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PRESENTED BY

LIFE AND WORKS
OF
WILLIAM COWPER.

THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER:

HIS LIFE, LETTERS, AND POEMS.

NOW FIRST COMPLETED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF

COWPER'S PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

EDITED BY THE

REV. T. S. GRIMSHAWE, A.M., F.S.A., M.R.S.L.,
VICAR OF BIDDENHAM, BEDFORDSHIRE;
AND AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF THE REV. LEIGH RICHMOND."

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PREFATORY REMARKS.

The very extensive sale of the former editions of the Works of Cowper, in eight volumes, now comprising an issue of no less than seventy thousand volumes, has led the publishers to contemplate the present edition in one volume 8vo. This form is intended to meet the demands of a numerous class of readers, daily becoming more literary in taste, and more influential in their character on the great mass of our population. At a period like the present, when the great framework of society is agitated by convulsions pervading nearly the whole of continental Europe, and when so many elements of evil are in active operation, it becomes a duty of the highest importance to imbue the public mind with whatever is calculated to uphold national peace and order, and to maintain among us a due reverence for laws, both human and divine. The faculty also and taste for reading now exists to so great an extent, that it assumes a question of no small moment how this faculty is to be directed; whether it shall be the giant's power to wound and to destroy, or like the Archangel's presence to heal and to save? Many readers require to be amused, but it is no less necessary that they should be instructed. To seek amusement and nothing further, denotes a head without wit, and a heart and a conscience without feeling. An author, if he be a Christian and a patriot, will never forget to edify as well as to amuse. There are few writers who possess and employ this happy art with more skill than Cowper. His aim is evidently to interest his reader, but he never forgets the appeal to his heart and conscience. It is strange if amidst the flowers of his poetic fancy, and the sallies of his epistolary humor, the Rose of Sharon does not insinuate its form, and breathe forth its sweet fragrance. No one knows better than Cowper how to interweave the sportiveness of his wit with the gravity of his *moral*, and yet always to be gay without levity, and grave without dulness. He is also *thoroughly English*, in the structure of his mind, in the honest expression of his feelings, in his hatred of oppression, his ardor for true liberty, his love for his country, and for whatever concerns the weal and woe of man. Nor does he ever fail to exhibit National Religion as the only sure foundation for national happiness and virtue. The works of such a writer can never

perish. Cowper has earned for himself a name which will always rank him among the household poets of England; while his prose has been admitted by the highest authority to be as immortal as his verse.*

In presenting therefore to the class of readers above specified, as well as to the public generally, this edition of the Works of Cowper, in a form accessible to all, the Publishers trust that the undertaking will be deemed to be both seasonable and useful. In this confidence they offer it with the fullest anticipations of its success. It remains only to state that it is a reprint of the former editions without any mutilation or curtailment.

It is gratifying to add that the Portrait, drawn from life by Romney in 1792, and now engraved by W. Greatbach in the first style of art, is esteemed by the few persons living who have a vivid recollection of the person and appearance of the Poet, as the most correct and happy likeness ever given to the public. The Illustrations, too, presented with this edition, are procured without regard to cost, so as to render the entire work, it is hoped, the most complete ever published.

December 3, 1848.

* Such is the recorded testimony of Charles James Fox, and the late Robert Hall. The latter observes as follows:—"The letters of Mr. Cowper are the finest specimens of the epistolary style in our language. To an air of inimitable ease they unite a high degree of correctness, such as could result only from the clearest intellect, combined with the most finished taste. There is scarcely a single word capable of being exchanged for a better, and of literary errors there are none. I have perused them with great admiration and delight."

DEDICATION.

TO THE

DOWAGER LADY THROCKMORTON.

Your Ladyship's peculiar intimacy with the poet Cowper, and your former residence at Weston, where every object is embellished by his muse, and clothed with a species of poetical verdure, give you a just title to have your name associated with his endeared memory.

But, independently of these considerations, you are recorded both in his poetry and prose, and have thus acquired a kind of double immortality. These reasons are sufficiently valid to authorize the present dedication. But there are additional motives.—the recollection of the happy hours, formerly spent at Weston, in your society and in that of Sir George Throckmorton, enhanced by the presence of our common lamented friend, Dr. Johnson. A dispensation which spares neither rank, accomplishments, nor virtues, has unhappily terminated this enjoyment, but it has not extinguished those sentiments of esteem and regard, with which

I have the honor to be,
My dear Lady Throckmorton,
Your very sincere and obliged friend,
T. S. GRIMSHAWE.

Biddenham, Feb. 28. 1835.

PREFACE.

In presenting to the public this new and complete edition of the Life, Correspondence, and Poems of Cowper, it may be proper for me to state the grounds on which it claims to be the only complete edition that has been, or can be published.

After the decease of this justly admired author, Hayley received from my lamented brother-in-law, Dr. Johnson, (so endeared by his exemplary attention to his afflicted relative,) every facility for his intended biography. Aided also by valuable contributions from other quarters, he was thus furnished with rich materials for the execution of his interesting work. The reception with which his Life of Cowper was honored, and the successive editions through which it passed, afforded unequivocal testimony to the industry and talents of the biographer and to the epistolary merits of the Poet. Still there were many, intimately acquainted with the character and principles of Cowper, who considered that, on the whole, a very erroneous impression was conveyed to the public. On this subject no one was perhaps more competent to form a just estimate than the late Dr. Johnson. A long and familiar intercourse with his endeared relative had afforded him all the advantages of a daily and minute observation. His possession of documents, and intimate knowledge of facts, enabled him to discover the partial suppression of some letters, and the total omission of others, that, in his judgment, were essential to the development of Cowper's real character. The cause of this procedure may be explained so as fully to exonerate Hayley from any charge injurious to his honor. His mind, however literary and elegant, was not precisely qualified to present a religious character to the view of the British public, without committing some important errors. Hence, in occasional parts of his work, his reflections are misplaced, sometimes injurious, and often injudicious; and in no portion of it is this defect more visible than where he attributes the malady of Cowper to the operation of religious causes.

It would be difficult to express the painful feeling produced by these facts on the minds of Dr. Johnson and of his friends. Hayley indeed seems to be afraid of exhibiting Cowper too much *in a religious garb*, lest he should either lessen his estimation, alarm the reader, or compromise himself. To these circumstances may be attributed the defects that we have noticed, and which have rendered his otherwise excellent production an imperfect work. The consequence, as regards Cowper, has been unfortunate. "People," observes Dr. Johnson, "read the Letters with 'the Task' in their recollection, (and *vice versâ*,) and are perplexed. They look for the Cowper of each in the other, and find him not: the

correspondency is destroyed. The character of Cowper is thus undetermined; mystery hangs over it, and the opinions formed of him are as various as the minds of the inquirers." It was to dissipate this illusion, that my lamented friend collected the "Private Correspondence," containing letters that had been previously suppressed, with the addition of others, then brought to light for the first time. Still there remains one more important object to be accomplished: viz., to present to the British public the *whole Correspondence in its entire and unbroken form, and in its chronological order.* Then, and not till *then*, will the real character of Cowper be fully understood and comprehended; and the consistency of his Christian character be found to harmonize with the Christian spirit of his pure and exalted productions.

Supplemental to such an undertaking is the task of revising Hayley's life of the Poet, purifying it from the errors that detract from its acknowledged value and adapting it to the demands and expectations of the religious public. That this desideratum has been long felt, to an extent far beyond what is commonly supposed, the Editor has had ample means of knowing, from his own personal observation, and from repeated assurances of the same import from his lamented friend, the Rev. Legh Richmond.*

The time for carrying this object into effect is now arrived. The termination of the copyright of Hayley's Life of Cowper, and access to the Private Correspondence collected by Dr. Johnson, enable the Editor to combine all these objects, and to present, for the first time, a *Complete Edition of the Works of Cowper*, which it is not in the power of any individual besides himself to accomplish, because all others are debarred access to the Private Correspondence. Upwards of two hundred letters will be thus incorporated with the former work of Hayley, in their due and chronological order.

The merits of "The Private Correspondence" are thus attested in a letter addressed to Dr. Johnson, by a no less distinguished judge than the late Rev. Robert Hall.—"It is quite unnecessary to say that I perused the letters with great admiration and delight. I have always considered the letters of Mr. Cowper as the finest specimen of the epistolary style in our language; and *these* appear to me of a superior description to the former, possessing as much beauty, with more piety and pathos. To an air of inimitable ease and carelessness they unite a high degree of correctness, such as could result only from the clearest intellect, combined with the most finished taste. I have scarcely found a single word which is capable of being exchanged for a better. Literary errors I can discern none. The selection of words, and the construction of periods, are inimitable; they present as striking a contrast as can well be conceived to the turgid verbosity which passes at present for fine writing, and which bears a great resemblance to the degeneracy which marks the style of Ammianus Marcellinus, as compared to that of Cicero or of Livy. In my humble opinion, the study of Cowper's prose may on this account be as useful in forming the taste of young people as his poetry. That the Letters will afford great delight to all persons of true taste, and that you will confer a most acceptable present on the reading world by publishing them, will not admit of a doubt."

All that now remains is for the Editor to say one word respecting himself. He has been called upon to engage in this undertaking both on public and private grounds. He is not insensible to the honor of such a commission, and yet feels that he is undertaking a delicate and responsible office. May he execute it in humble dependence on the Divine blessing, and in a spirit that accords with the venerated name of Cowper! Had the life of his endeared friend, Dr. Johnson, been prolonged, no man would have been better qualified for such an office. His ample sources of information, his name, and his profound veneration for the memory of Cowper, (whom he tenderly watched while living, and whose eyes he closed in death,) would have awakened an interest to which no other writer could presume to lay claim. It is under the failure of this expectation, which is extinguished by the grave, that the editor feels himself called upon to endeavor to supply the void; and thus to fulfil what is due to the character of Cowper, and to the known wishes of his departed friend. Peace be to his ashes! They now rest near those of his beloved Bard, while their happy spirits are reunited in a world where no cloud obscures the mind, and no sorrow depresses the heart: and where the mysterious dispensations of Providence will be found to have been in accordance with his unerring wisdom and mercy.

It is impossible for the Editor to specify the various instances of revision in the narrative of Hayley, because they are sometimes minute or verbal, at other times more enlarged. The object has been to retain the basis of his work, as far as possible. The introduction of new matter is principally where the interests of religion, or a regard to Cowper's character seemed to require it; and for such remarks the Editor is solely responsible.

* Of the letters contained in the "Private Correspondence" he emphatically remarked, "Cowper will never be clearly and satisfactorily understood without them."

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THE LIFE OF COWPER.

PART THE FIRST.

The family of Cowper appears to have held, for several centuries, a respectable rank among the merchants and gentry of England. We learn from the life of the first Earl Cowper, in the Biographia Britannica, that his ancestors were inhabitants of Sussex, in the reign of Edward the Fourth. The name is found repeatedly among the sheriffs of London; and William Cowper, who resided as a country gentleman in Kent, was created a baronet by King Charles the First, in 1641.* But the family rose to higher distinction in the beginning of the last century, by the remarkable circumstance of producing two brothers, who both obtained a seat in the House of Peers by their eminence in the profession of the law. William, the elder, became Lord High Chancellor in 1707. Spencer Cowper, the younger, was appointed Chief Justice of Chester in 1717, and afterwards a Judge in the Court of Common Pleas, being permitted by the particular favor of the king, to hold those two offices to the end of his life. He died in Lincoln's Inn, on the 10th of December, 1728, and has the higher claim to our notice as the immediate ancestor of the poet. By his first wife, Judith Pennington (whose exemplary character is still revered by her descendants), Judge Cowper left several children; among them a daughter, Judith, who at the age of eighteen discovered a striking talent for poetry, in the praise of her contemporary poets Pope and Hughes. This lady, the wife of Colonel Madan, transmitted her own poetical and devout spirit to her daughter Frances Maria, who was married to her cousin, Major Cowper; the amiable character of Maria will unfold itself in the course of this work, as the friend and correspondent of her more eminent relation, the second grandchild of the Judge, destined to honor the name of Cowper, by displaying, with peculiar purity and fervor, the double enthusiasm of poetry and devotion. The father of the subject of the following pages was John Cowper, the Judge's second son, who took his degrees in divinity, was chaplain to King George the Second, and resided at his Rectory of Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, the scene of the poet's infancy, which he has thus commemorated in a singularly beautiful and pathetic composition on the portrait of his mother.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more;
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor:
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capt,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.
Short-liv'd possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effac'd
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made, [laid;
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd;
All this, and, more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall;
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks
That humor interpos'd too often makes:
All this, still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee as my numbers may.

The parent, whose merits are so feelingly recorded by the filial tenderness of the poet, was Ann, daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall, in Norfolk. This lady, whose family is said to have been originally from Wales, was married in the bloom of youth to Dr. Cowper; after giving birth to several children, who died in their infancy, and leaving two sons, William, the immediate subject of this memorial, born at Berkhamstead on the 26th of November, 1731, and John (whose

* This gentleman was a writer of English verse, and, with rare munificence, bestowed both an epitaph and a monument on that illustrious divine, the venerable Hooker. In the edition of Walton's Lives, by Zouch, the curious reader may find the epitaph written by Sir William Cowper.

accomplishments and pious death will be described in the course of this compilation), she died in childbed, at the early age of thirty-four, in 1737. Those who delight in contemplating the best affections of our nature will ever admire the tender sensibility with which the poet has acknowledged his obligations to this amiable mother, in a poem composed more than fifty years after her decease. Readers of this description may find a pleasure in observing how the praise so liberally bestowed on this tender parent, at so late a period, is confirmed (if praise so unquestionable may be said to receive confirmation) by another poetical record of her merit, which the hand of affinity and affection bestowed upon her tomb—a record written at a time when the poet, who was destined to prove, in his advanced life, her most powerful eulogist, had hardly begun to show the dawn of that genius which, after many years of silent affliction, rose like a star emerging from tempestuous darkness.

The monument of Mrs. Cowper, erected by her husband in the chancel of St. Peter's church at Berkhamstead, contains the following verses, composed by a young lady, her niece, the late Lady Walsingham.

Here lies, in early years bereft of life,
The best of mothers, and the kindest wife:
Who neither knew nor practis'd any art,
Secure in all she wish'd, her husband's heart.
Her love to him, still prevalent in death,
Pray'd Heav'n to bless him with her latest breath.
Still was she studious never to offend,
And glad of an occasion to commend;
With ease would pardon injuries receiv'd,
Nor e'er was cheerful when another griev'd;
Despising state, with her own lot content,
Enjoy'd the comforts of a life well spent;
Resign'd, when Heaven demanded back her breath,
Her mind heroic 'midst the pangs of death.
Whoe'er thou art that dost this tomb draw near,
O stay awhile and shed a friendly tear;
These lines, tho' weak, are as herself sincere.

The truth and tenderness of this epitaph will more than compensate with every candid reader the imperfection ascribed to it by its young and modest author. To have lost a parent of a character so virtuous and endearing, at an early period of his childhood, was the prime misfortune of Cowper, and what contributed perhaps in the highest degree to the dark coloring of his subsequent life. The influence of a good mother on the first years of her children, whether nature has given them peculiar strength or peculiar delicacy of frame, is equally inestimable. It is the prerogative and the felicity of such a mother to temper the arrogance of the strong, and to dissipate the timidity of the tender. The infancy of Cowper was delicate in no common degree, and his constitution discovered at a very early season that morbid tendency to diffidence, to melancholy and despair, which darkened as he advanced in years into periodical fits of the most deplorable depression.

The period having arrived for commencing his education, he was sent to a reputable school at Market-street, in Bedfordshire, under the care of Dr. Pitman, and it is probable that he was removed from it in consequence of an ocular complaint. From a circumstance which he relates of himself at that period, in a letter written in 1792, he seems to have been in danger of resembling Milton in the misfortune of blindness, as he resembled him, more happily, in the fervency of a devout and poetical spirit.

"I have been all my life," says Cowper, "subject to inflammations of the eyes, and in my boyish days had specks on both, that threatened to cover them. My father, alarmed for the consequences, sent me to a female oculist of great renown at that time, in whose house I abode two years, but to no good purpose. From her I went to Westminster school, where, at the age of fourteen, the small-pox seized me, and proved the better oculist of the two, for it delivered me from them all: not however from great liableness to inflammation, to which I am in a degree still subject, though much less than formerly, since I have been constant in the use of a hot foot-bath every night, the last thing before going to rest."

It appears a strange process in education, to send a tender child, from a long residence in the house of a female oculist, immediately into all the hardships attendant on a public school. But the mother of Cowper was dead, and fathers, however excellent, are, in general, utterly incompetent to the management of their young and tender offspring. The little Cowper was sent to his first school in the year of his mother's death, and how ill-suited the scene was to his peculiar character is evident from the description of his sensations in that season of life, which is often, very erroneously, extolled as the happiest period of human existence. He has been frequently heard to lament the persecution he suffered in his childish years, from the cruelty of his school-fellows, in the two scenes of his education. His own forcible expressions represented him at Westminster as not daring to raise his eye above the shoe-buckle of the elder boys, who were too apt to tyrannize over his gentle spirit. The acuteness of his feelings in his childhood, rendered those important years (which might have produced, under tender cultivation, a series of lively enjoyments) mournful periods of increasing timidity and depression. In the most cheerful hours of his advanced life, he could never advert to this season

without shuddering at the recollection of its wretchedness. Yet to this perhaps the world is indebted for the pathetic and moral eloquence of those forcible admonitions to parents, which give interest and beauty to his admirable poem on public schools. Poets may be said to realize, in some measure, the poetical idea of the nightingale's singing with a thorn at her breast, as their most exquisite songs have often originated in the acuteness of their personal sufferings. Of this obvious truth, the poem just mentioned is a very memorable example; and, if any readers have thought the poet too severe in his strictures on that system of education, to which we owe some of the most accomplished characters that ever gave celebrity to a civilized nation, such readers will be candidly reconciled to that moral severity of reproof, in recollecting that it flowed from severe personal experience, united to the purest spirit of philanthropy and patriotism.

The relative merits of public and private education is a question that has long agitated the world. Each has its partizans, its advantages, and defects; and, like all general principles, its application must greatly depend on the circumstances of rank, future destination, and the peculiarities of character and temper. For the full development of the powers and faculties of the mind—for the acquisition of the various qualifications that fit men to sustain with brilliancy and distinction the duties of active life, whether in the cabinet, the senate, or the forum—for scenes of busy enterprize, where knowledge of the world and the growth of manly spirit seem indispensable; in all such cases, we are disposed to believe, that the palm must be assigned to public education.

But, on the other hand, if we reflect that brilliancy is oftentimes a flame which consumes its object, that knowledge of the world is, for the most part, but a knowledge of the evil that is in the world; and that early habits of extravagance and vice, which are ruinous in their results, are not unfrequently contracted at public schools; if to these facts we add that man is a candidate for immortality, and that "life" (as Sir William Temple observes) "is but the parenthesis of eternity," it then becomes a question of solemn import, whether integrity and principle do not find a soil more congenial for their growth in the shade and retirement of private education? The one is an advancement for time, the other for eternity. The former affords facilities for making men great, but often at the expense of happiness and conscience. The latter diminishes the temptations to vice, and, while it affords a field for useful and honorable exertion, augments the means of being wise and holy.

We leave the reader to decide the great problem for himself. That he may be enabled to form a right estimate, we would urge him to suffer time and eternity to pass in solemn and deliberate review before him.

That the public school was a scene by no means adapted to the sensitive mind of Cowper is evident. Nor can we avoid cherishing the apprehension that his spirit, naturally morbid, experienced a fatal inroad from that period. He nevertheless acquired the reputation of scholarship, with the advantage of being known and esteemed by some of the aspiring characters of his own age, who subsequently became distinguished in the great arena of public life.

With these acquisitions, he left Westminster at the age of eighteen, in 1749: and, as if destiny had determined that all his early situations in life should be peculiarly irksome to his delicate feelings, and tend rather to promote than to counteract his constitutional tendency to melancholy, he was removed from a public school to the office of an attorney. He resided three years in the house of a Mr. Chapman, to whom he was engaged by articles for that time. Here he was placed for the study of a profession which nature seemed resolved that he never should practise.

The law is a kind of soldiership, and, like the profession of arms, it may be said to require for the constitution of its heroes,

"A frame of adamant, a soul of fire."

The soul of Cowper had indeed its fire, but fire so refined and ethereal, that it could not be expected to shine in the gross atmosphere of worldly contention. Perhaps there never existed a mortal, who, possessing, with a good person, intellectual powers naturally strong and highly cultivated, was so utterly unfit to encounter the bustle and perplexities of public life. But the extreme modesty and shyness of his nature, which disqualified him for scenes of business and ambition, endeared him inexpressibly to those who had opportunities to enjoy his society, and discernment to appreciate the ripening excellencies of his character.

Reserved as he was, to an extraordinary and painful degree, his heart and mind were yet admirably fashioned by nature for all the refined intercourse and confidential enjoyment both of friendship and love: but, though apparently formed to possess and to communicate an extraordinary portion of moral felicity, the incidents of his life were such, that, conspiring with the peculiarities of his nature, they rendered him, at different times, the victim of sorrow. The variety and depth of his sufferings in early life, from extreme tenderness of feeling, are very forcibly displayed in the following verses, which formed part of a letter to one of his female relatives, at the time they were composed. The letter has

perished, and the verses owe their preservation to the affectionate memory of the lady to whom they were addressed.

Doom'd as I am in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past;
Depriv'd of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost;
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humor or of spleen!
Still, still, I mourn, with each returning day,
Him* snatch'd by fate in early youth away;
And her†—thro' tedious years of doubt and pain,
Fix'd in her choice, and faithful—but in vain!
O prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
Whose eye ne'er yet refus'd the wretch a tear;
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes;
See me—ere yet my destin'd course half done,
Cast forth a wand'rer on a world unknown!
See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
And ready tears wait only leave to flow!
Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
All that delights the happy—palls with me!

Having concluded the term of his engagement with the solicitor, he settled himself in chambers in the Inner Temple, as a regular student of law; but although he resided there till the age of thirty-three, he rambled (according to his own colloquial account of his early years) from the thorny road of his austere patroness, Jurisprudence, into the primrose paths of literature and poetry. During this period, he contributed two of the Satires in Duncombe's Horace, which are worthy of his pen, and indications of his rising genius. He also cultivated the friendship of some literary characters, who had been his schoolfellows at Westminster, particularly Colman, Bonnell Thornton, and Lloyd. Of these early associates of Cowper, it may be interesting to learn a brief history. Few men could have entered upon life with brighter prospects than Colman. His father was Envoy at the Court of Florence, and his mother was sister to the Countess of Bath. Possessed of talents that qualified him for exertion, with a classical taste perceptible in his translation of Horace's Art of Poetry, and of the works of Terence, he relinquished the bar, to which he had been called, and became principally known for his devotedness to theatrical pursuits. His private life was not consistent with the rules of morality; and he closed his days, after a protracted malady, by dying in a Lunatic Asylum in Paddington, in the year 1794.

To Bonnell Thornton, jointly with Colman, we owe the Connoisseur, to which Cowper contributed a few numbers. Thornton also united with Colman and Warner in a translation of Plautus. But his talents, instead of being profitably employed, were chiefly marked by a predilection for humor, in the exercise of which he was not very discreet; for the venerated muse of Gray did not escape his ridicule, and the celebrated Ode to St. Cecilia was made the occasion of a public burlesque performance, the relation of which would not accord with the design of this undertaking. He who aims at nothing better than to amuse and divert, and to excite a laugh at the expense of both taste and judgment, proposes to himself no very exalted object. Thornton died in the year 1770, aged forty-seven.

Lloyd was formerly usher at Westminster School, but feeling the irksomeness of the situation, resigned it, and commenced author. His Poems have been repeatedly republished. His life presented a scene of thoughtless extravagance and dissipation. Overwhelmed with debt, and pursued by his creditors, he was at length confined in the Fleet Prison, where he expired, the victim of his excesses, at the early age of thirty-one years.

We record these facts,—1st, That we may adore that mercy which, by a timely interposition, rescued the future author of the Task from such impending ruin:—2ndly, To show that scenes of gaiety and dissipation, however enlivened by flashes of wit, and distinguished by literary superiority, are perilous to character, health, and fortune; and that the talents, which, if beneficially employed, might have led to happiness and honor, when perverted to unworthy ends, often lead prematurely to the grave, or render the past painful in the retrospect, and the future the subject of fearful anticipation and alarm.

Happily, Cowper escaped from this vortex of misery and ruin. His juvenile poems discover a contemplative spirit, and a mind early impressed with sentiments of piety. In proof of this assertion, we select a few stanzas from an ode written, when he was very young, on reading Sir Charles Grandison.

To rescue from the tyrant's sword
The oppress'd;—unseen and unimplor'd,
To cheer the face of woe;
From lawless insult to defend
An orphan's right—a fallen friend,
And a forgiven foe:

These, these, distinguish from the crowd,
And these alone, the great and good,
The guardians of mankind.
Whose bosoms with these virtues heave,
Oh! with what matchless speed, they leave
The multitude behind!

Then ask ye from what cause on earth
Virtues like these derive their birth?
Derived from Heaven alone,
Full on that favor'd breast they shine,
Where faith and resignation join
To call the blessing down.

* Sir William Russel, the favorite friend of the young poet.

† Miss Theodora Cowper.

Such is that heart:—but while the Muse
Thy theme, O Richardson, pursues,
Her feebler spirits faint:
She cannot reach, and would not wrong,
That subject for an angel's song,
The hero, and the saint.

His early turn to moralize on the slightest occasion will appear from the following verses, which he wrote at the age of eighteen: and in which those who love to trace the rise and progress of genius will, I think, be pleased to remark the very promising seeds of those peculiar powers, which unfolded themselves in the richest maturity at a remoter period, and rendered that beautiful and sublime poem, The Task, the most instructive and interesting of modern compositions. Young as the poet was when he produced the following lines, we may observe that he had probably been four years in the habit of writing English verse, as he has said in one of his letters, that he began his poetical career at the age of fourteen, by translating an elegy of Tibullus. I have reason to believe that he wrote many poems in his early life; and the singular merit of this juvenile composition is sufficient to make the friends of genius regret that an excess of diffidence prevented him from preserving the poetry of his youth.

VERSES,

WRITTEN AT BATH, ON FINDING THE HEEL OF A SHOE, 1748.

Fortune! I thank thee: gentle goddess! thanks!
Not that my Muse, though bashful, shall deny
She would have thank'd thee rather hadst thou cast
A treasure in her way; for neither meed
Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes
And bowel-racking pains of emptiness,
Nor noon-tide feast, nor evening's cool repast,
Hopes she from this—presumptuous, tho', perhaps,
The cobbler, leather-carving artist, might.
Nathless she thanks thee, and accepts thy boon
Whatever, not as erst the fabled cock,
Vain-glorious fool! unknowing what he found,
Spurn'd the rich gem thou gav'st him. Wherefore ah!
Why not on me that favor (worthier sure)
Conferr'dst thou, goddess? Thou art blind, thou say'st;
Enough—thy blindness shall excuse the deed.
Nor does my Muse no benefit exhale
From this thy scant indulgence!—even here,
Hints, worthy sage philosophy, are found;
Illustrious hints, to moralize my song!
This pondrous heel of perforated hide
Compact, with pegs indented, many a row,
Haply,—for such its massy form bespeaks,—
The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown
Upbore: on this supported, oft he stretch'd,
With uncouth strides along the furrow'd glebe,
Flatt'ning the stubborn clod, 'till cruel time
(What will not cruel time?) or a wry step,
Sever'd the strict cohesion; when, alas!
He who could erst with even, equal pace,
Pursue his destin'd way with symmetry
And some proportion form'd, now, on one side,
Curtail'd and maim'd, the sport of vagrant boys,
Cursing his frail supporter treacherous prop!
With toilsome steps, and difficult moves on.
Thus fares it oft with other than the feet
Of humble villager. The statesman thus
Up the steep road where proud ambition leads,
Aspiring, first uninterrupted winds
His prosperous way; nor fears miscarriage foul,
While policy prevails, and friends prove true:
But that support soon failing, by him left
On whom he most depended, basely left,
Betray'd, deserted: from his airy height
Headlong he falls, and, through the rest of life,
Drags the dull load of disappointment on.

Of a youth, who, in a scene like Bath, could produce such a meditation, it might fairly be expected that he would

"In riper life, exempt from public haunt,
Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

Though extreme diffidence, and a tendency to despond, seemed early to preclude Cowper from the expectation of climbing to the splendid summit of the profession he had chosen; yet, by the interest of his family, he had prospects of emolument in a line of life that appeared better suited to the modesty of his nature and to his moderate ambition.

In his thirty-first year he was nominated to the offices of Reading Clerk and Clerk of the private Committees in the House of Lords—a situation the more desirable, as such an establishment might enable him to marry early in life; a measure to which he was doubly disposed by judgment and inclination. But the peculiarities of his wonderful mind rendered him unable to support the ordinary duties of his new office: for the idea of reading in public proved a source of torture to his tender and apprehensive spirit. An expedient was devised to promote his interest without wounding his feelings. Resigning his situation of Reading Clerk, he was appointed Clerk of the Journals in the same House of Parliament. Of his occupation, in consequence of this new appointment, he speaks in the following letter to a lady, who will become known and endeared to the reader in proportion to the interest he takes in the writings of Cowper.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Temple, August 9, 1763.

My dear Cousin,—Having promised to write to you, I make haste to be as good as my word. I have a pleasure in writing to you at any time, but especially at the present, when my days are spent in reading the Journals, and my nights in dreaming of them; an employment not very agreeable to a head that has long been habituated to the luxury

of choosing its subject, and has been as little employed upon business as if it had grown upon the shoulders of a much wealthier gentleman. But the numscull pays for it now, and will not presently forget the discipline it has undergone lately. If I succeed in this doubtful piece of promotion, I shall have at least this satisfaction to reflect upon, that the volumes I write will be treasured up with the utmost care for ages, and will last as long as the English constitution—a duration which ought to satisfy the vanity of any author who has a spark of love for his country. Oh, my good Cousin! if I was to open my heart to you, I could show you strange sights; nothing I flatter myself that would shock you, but a great deal that would make you wonder. I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men that I have ever conversed with. Certainly I am not an absolute fool: but I have more weaknesses than the greatest of all the fools I can recollect at present. In short, if I was as fit for the next world as I am unfit for this, and God forbid I should speak it in vanity, I would not change conditions with any saint in Christendom.

My destination is settled at last, and I have obtained a furlough. Margate is the word, and what do you think will ensue, Cousin? I know what you expect, but ever since I was born I have been good at disappointing the most natural expectations. Many years ago, Cousin, there was a possibility that I might prove a very different thing from what I am at present. My character is now fixed, and riveted fast upon me, and, between friends, is not a very splendid one, or likely to be guilty of much fascination.

Adieu, my dear Cousin! so much as I love you, I wonder how it has happened I was never in love with you. Thank Heaven that I never was, for at this time I have had a pleasure in writing to you, which in that case I should have forfeited. Let me hear from you, or I shall reap but half the reward that is due to my noble indifference.

Yours ever, and evermore,
W. C.

It was hoped from the change of his station that his personal appearance in parliament might not be required, but a parliamentary dispute made it necessary for him to appear at the bar of the House of Lords, to entitle himself publicly to the office.

Speaking of this important incident in a sketch, which he once formed himself, of passages in his early life, he expressed what he endured at the time in these remarkable words: "They whose spirits are formed like mine, to whom a public exhibition of themselves is mortal poison, may have some idea of the horrors of my situation—others can have none."

His terrors on this occasion arose to such an astonishing height, that they utterly overwhelmed his reason; for, although he had endeavored to prepare himself for his public duty, by attending closely at the office for several months, to examine the parliamentary journals, his application was rendered useless by that excess of diffidence, which made him conceive that, whatever knowledge he might previously acquire, it would all forsake him at the bar of the House. This distressing apprehension increased to such a degree, as the time for his appearance approached, that, when the day so anxiously dreaded arrived, he was unable to make the experiment. The very friends who called on him for the purpose of attending him to the House of Lords, acquiesced in the cruel necessity of his relinquishing the prospect of a station so severely formidable to a frame of such singular sensibility.

The conflict between the wishes of honorable ambition and the terrors of diffidence so entirely overwhelmed his health and faculties, that, after two learned and benevolent divines (Mr. John Cowper, his brother, and the celebrated Mr. Martin Madan, his first cousin) had vainly endeavored to establish a lasting tranquillity in his mind by friendly and religious conversation, it was found necessary to remove him to St. Alban's, where he resided a considerable time, under the care of that eminent physician, Dr. Cotton, a scholar and a poet, who added to many accomplishments a peculiar sweetness of manners, in very advanced life, when I had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him.

The misfortune of mental derangement is a topic of such awful delicacy, that I consider it to be the duty of a biographer rather to sink, in tender silence, than to proclaim, with circumstantial and offensive temerity, the minute particulars of a calamity to which all human beings are exposed, and perhaps in proportion as they have received from nature those delightful but dangerous gifts, a heart of exquisite tenderness and a mind of creative energy.

This is a sight for pity to pursue,
Till she resembles, faintly, what she views;
Till sympathy contracts a kindred pain,
Pierc'd with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies, that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least.

. . . . . .

But with a soul that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes.
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright;
The screws revers'd (a task, which, if He please,
God, in a moment, executes with ease),

Ten thousand, thousand strings at once go loose;
Lost till He tune them, all their power and use.

. . . . . .

No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels;
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou, sad sufferer, under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss the chast'ning hand!

It is in this solemn and instructive light, that Cowper himself teaches us to consider the calamity of which I am now speaking; and of which, like his illustrious brother of Parnassus, the younger Tasso, he was occasionally a most affecting example. Providence appears to have given a striking lesson to mankind, to guard both virtue and genius against pride of heart and pride of intellect, by thus suspending the affections and the talents of two most tender and sublime poets, who resembled each other, not more in the attribute of poetic genius than in the similarity of the dispensation that quenched its light and ardor.

From December, 1763, to the following July, the sensitive mind of Cowper appears to have labored under the severest suffering of morbid depression; but the medical skill of Dr. Cotton, and the cheerful, benignant manners of that accomplished physician, gradually succeeded, with the blessing of Heaven, in removing the indescribable load of religious despondency, which had clouded the faculties of this interesting man. His ideas of religion were changed from the gloom of terror and despair to the brightness of inward joy and peace.

This juster and happier view of evangelical truth is said to have arisen in his mind, while he was reading the third chapter of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The words that rivetted his attention were the following: "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*" Rom. iii. 25.

It was to this passage, which contains so lucid an exposition of the Gospel method of salvation, that, under the divine blessing, the poet owed the recovery of a previously disordered intellect and the removal of a load from a deeply oppressed conscience—he saw, by a new and powerful perception, how sin could be pardoned, and the sinner be saved—that the way appointed of God was through the great propitiation and sacrifice upon the cross—that faith lays hold of the promise, and thus becomes the instrument of conveying pardon and peace to the soul.

It is remarkable how God, in every age, from the first promulgation of the Gospel to the present time, and under all the various modifications of society, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, has put his seal to this fundamental doctrine of the Gospel.

Whether we contemplate man amid the polished scenes of civilized and enlightened Europe, or the rude ferocity of savage tribes—whether it be the refined Hindoo, or the unlettered Hottentot, whose mind becomes accessible to the power and influences of religion, the cause and the effect are the same. It is the doctrine of the cross that works the mighty change. The worldly wise may reject this doctrine,—the spiritually wise comprehend and receive it. But, whether it be rejected, with all its tremendous responsibilities, or received with its inestimable blessings, the truth itself still remains unchanged and unchangeable, attested by the records of every church and the experience of every believing heart—"*the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*" 1 Cor. i. 18.

It is impossible not to admire the power, and adore the mercy, that thus wrought a double deliverance in the mind of Cowper by a process so remarkable. Devout contemplation became more and more dear to his reviving spirit. Resolving to relinquish all thoughts of a laborious profession, and all intercourse with the busy world, he acquiesced in a plan of settling at Huntingdon, by the advice of his brother, who, as a minister of the Gospel, and a fellow of Bene't College, Cambridge, resided in that University; a situation so near to the place chosen for Cowper's retirement, that it afforded to these affectionate brothers opportunities of easy and frequent intercourse. I regret that all the letters which passed between them have perished, and the more so, as they sometimes corresponded in verse. John Cowper was also a poet. He had engaged to execute a translation of Voltaire's Henriade, and in the course of the work requested, and obtained, the assistance of William, who translated, as he informed me himself, two entire cantos of the poem. This fraternal production is said to have appeared in a magazine of the year 1759. I have discovered a rival, and probably an inferior translation, so published, but the joint work of the poetical brothers has hitherto eluded all my researches.

In June, 1765, the reviving invalid removed to a private lodging in the town of Huntingdon, but Providence soon introduced him into a family, which afforded him one of the most singular and valuable friends that ever watched an afflicted mortal in seasons of overwhelming adversity; that friend, to whom the poet exclaims in the commencement of the Task,

And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm, this twentieth winter, I perceive
Fast locked in mine with pleasure, such as love,
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth,
And well tried virtues, could alone inspire;

Witness a joy, that thou hast doubled long!
Thou knowest my praise of Nature most sincere;
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.

These verses would be alone sufficient to make every poetical reader take a lively interest in the lady they describe; but these are far from being the only tribute which the gratitude of Cowper has paid to the endearing virtues of his female companion. More poetical memorials of her merit will be found in these volumes, and in verse so exquisite, that it may be questioned if the most passionate lover ever gave rise to poetry more tender or more sublime.

Yet, in this place, it appears proper to apprize the reader, that it was not love, in the common acceptation of the word, which inspired these admirable eulogies. The attachment of Cowper to Mrs. Unwin, the Mary of the poet, was an attachment perhaps unparalleled. Their domestic union, though not sanctioned by the common forms of life, was supported with perfect innocence, and endeared to them both by their having struggled together through a series of sorrow. A spectator of sensibility, who had contemplated the uncommon tenderness of their attention to the wants and infirmities of each other in the decline of life, might have said of their singular attachment,

L'Amour n'a rien de si tendre,
Ni l'Amitié de si doux.

As a connection so extraordinary forms a striking feature in the history of the poet, the reader will probably be anxious to investigate its origin and progress.—It arose from the following little incident.

The countenance and deportment of Cowper, though they indicated his native shyness, had yet very singular powers of attraction. On his first appearance in one of the churches of Huntingdon, he engaged the notice and respect of an amiable young man, William Cawthorne Unwin, then a student at Cambridge, who, having observed, after divine service, that the interesting stranger was taking a solitary turn under a row of trees, was irresistibly led to share his walk, and to solicit his acquaintance.

They were soon pleased with each other, and the intelligent youth, charmed with the acquisition of such a friend, was eager to communicate the treasure to his parents, who had long resided in Huntingdon.

Mr. Unwin, the father, had for some years been master of a free school in the town; but, as he advanced in life he quitted the laborious situation, and, settling in a large convenient house in the High-street, contented himself with a few domestic pupils, whom he instructed in classical literature.

This worthy divine, who was now far advanced in years, had been lecturer to the two churches at Huntingdon, before he obtained from his college at Cambridge the living of Grimston. While he lived in expectation of this preferment, he had attached himself to a young lady of lively talents, and remarkably fond of reading. This lady, who, in the process of time, and by a series of singular events, became the friend and guardian of Cowper, was the daughter of Mr. Cawthorne, a draper in Ely. She was married to Mr. Unwin, on his succeeding to the preferment that he expected from his college, and settled with him on his living of Grimston; but, not liking the situation and society of that sequestered scene, she prevailed on her husband to establish himself in Huntingdon, where he was known and respected.

They had resided there many years, and, with their two only children, a son and a daughter, they formed a cheerful and social family, when the younger Unwin, described by Cowper as

"A friend,
Whose worth deserves the warmest lay
That ever friendship penn'd,"

presented to his parents the solitary stranger, on whose retirement he had benevolently intruded, and whose welfare he became more and more anxious to promote. An event highly pleasing and comfortable to Cowper soon followed this introduction; he was affectionately solicited by all the Unwins to relinquish his lonely lodging, and to become a part of their family.

We are now arrived at that period in the personal history of Cowper, when we are fortunately enabled to employ his own descriptive powers in recording the events and characters that particularly interested him, and in displaying the state of his mind at a remarkable season of his chequered life. The following are among the earliest letters of this affectionate writer, which the kindness of his friends and relatives has supplied towards the execution and embellishment of this work.

Among his juvenile intimates and correspondents, he particularly regarded two gentlemen, who devoted themselves to different branches of the law, the first Lord Thurlow, and Joseph Hill, Esq., whose name appears in Cowper's Poems, prefixed to a few verses of exquisite beauty, a brief epistle, that seems to have more of the genuine ease, spirit, and moral gaiety of Horace, than any original epistle in the English language. From these two confidential associates of the poet, in his unclouded years, we might have expected materials for the display of his early genius; but, in the torrent of busy and splendid life, which bore the first of them to a mighty distance from his less ambitious fellow-student

of the Temple, the private letters and verses that arose from their youthful intimacy have perished.

The letters to Mr. Hill are copious, and extend through a long period of time, and although many of them were of a nature not suited to publication, yet many others will illustrate and embellish this volume. The steadiness and integrity of Mr. Hill's regard for a person so much sequestered from his sight gives him a particular title to be distinguished among those whom Cowper has honored, by addressing to them his highly interesting and affectionate letters. Many of these, which we shall occasionally introduce in the parts of the narrative to which they belong, may tend to confirm a truth, not unpleasing to the majority of readers, that the temperate zone of moderate fortune, equally removed from high and low life, is most favorable to the permanence of friendship.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Huntingdon, June 24, 1765.

Dear Joe,—The only recompense I can make you for your kind attention to my affairs, during my illness, is to tell you that, by the mercy of God, I am restored to perfect health, both of mind and body. This, I believe, will give you pleasure, and I would gladly do anything from which you could receive it.

I left St. Alban's, on the 17th, and arrived that day at Cambridge, spent some time there with my brother, and came hither on the 22nd. I have a lodging that puts me continually in mind of our summer excursions; we have had many worse, and except the size of it (which however is sufficient for a single man) but few better. I am not quite alone, having brought a servant with me from St. Alban's, who is the very mirror of fidelity and affection for his master. And, whereas the Turkish Spy says, he kept no servant because he would not have an enemy in his house, I hired mine because I would have a friend. Men do not usually bestow these encomiums on their lackeys, nor do they usually deserve them, but I have had experience of mine, both in sickness and in health, and never saw his fellow.

The river Ouse, I forget how they spell it, is the most agreeable circumstance in this part of the world; at this town it is, I believe, as wide as the Thames at Windsor; nor does the silver Thames better deserve that epithet, nor has it more flowers upon its banks, these being attributes which, in strict truth, belong to neither. Fluellen would say, they are as like as my fingers to my fingers, and there is salmon in both. It is a noble stream to bathe in, and I shall make that use of it three times a week, having introduced myself to it for the first time this morning.

I beg you will remember me to all my friends, which is a task will cost you no great pains to execute—particularly remember me to those of your own house, and believe me

Your very affectionate

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 1, 1765.

My dear Lady Hesketh,—Since the visit you were so kind to pay me in the Temple (the only time I ever saw you without pleasure), what have I not suffered? And, since it has pleased God to restore me to the use of my reason, what have I not enjoyed? You know, by experience, how pleasant it is to feel the first approaches of health after a fever; but, oh! the fever of the brain! To feel the quenching of that fire is indeed a blessing which I think it impossible to receive without the most consummate gratitude. Terrible as this chastisement is, I acknowledge in it the hand of an infinite justice; nor is it at all more difficult for me to perceive in it the hand of an infinite mercy likewise: when I consider the effect it has had upon me, I am exceedingly thankful for it, and, without hypocrisy, esteem it the greatest blessing, next to life itself, I ever received from the divine bounty. I pray God that I may ever retain this sense of it, and then I am sure I shall continue to be, as I am at present, really happy.

I write thus to you, that you may not think me a forlorn and wretched creature; which you might be apt to do, considering my very distant removal from every friend I have in the world—a circumstance which, before this event befell me, would undoubtedly have made me so; but my affliction has taught me a road to happiness, which, without it, I should never have found; and I know, and have experience of it every day, that the mercy of God, to him who believes himself the object of it, is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of every other blessing.

You may now inform all those whom you think really interested in my welfare, that they have no need to be apprehensive on the score of my happiness at present. And you yourself will believe that my happiness is no dream, because I have told you the foundation on which it is built. What I have written would appear like enthusiasm to many, for we are apt to give that name to every warm affection of the mind in others which we have not experienced in ourselves; but to you, who have so much to be thankful for,

and a temper inclined to gratitude, it will not appear so.

I beg you will give my love to Sir Thomas, and believe that I am obliged to you both for inquiring after me at St. Alban's.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Huntingdon, July 3, 1765.

Dear Joe,—Whatever you may think of the matter, it is no such easy thing to keep house for two people. A man cannot always live like the lions in the Tower; and a joint of meat, in so small a family, is an endless incumbrance. In short, I never knew how to pity poor housekeepers before; but now I cease to wonder at that politic cast which their occupation usually gives to their countenance, for it is really a matter full of perplexity.

I have received but one visit since here I came. I don't mean that I have refused any, but that only one has been offered. This was from my woollen-draper; a very healthy, wealthy, sensible, sponsible man, and extremely civil. He has a cold bath, and has promised me a key of it, which I shall probably make use of in the winter. He has undertaken, too, to get me the St. James's Chronicle three times a-week, and to show me Hinchinbrook House, and to do every service for me in his power; so that I did not exceed the truth, you see, when I spoke of his civility. Here is a card-assembly, and a dancing-assembly, and a horse-race, and a club, and a bowling-green; so that I am well off, you perceive, in point of diversions; especially as I shall go to 'em, just as much as I should if I lived a thousand miles off. But no matter for that; the spectator at a play is more entertained than the actor; and in real life it is much the same. You will say, perhaps, that if I never frequent these places, I shall not come within the description of a spectator; and you will say right. I have made a blunder, which shall be corrected in the next edition.

You are old dog at a bad tenant; witness all my uncle's and your mother's geese and gridirons. There is something so extremely impertinent in entering upon a man's premises, and using them without paying for 'em, that I could easily resent it if I would. But I rather choose to entertain myself with thinking how you will scour the man about, and worry him to death, if once you begin with him. Poor wretch! I leave him entirely to your mercy.

My dear Joe, you desire me to write long letters. I have neither matter enough nor perseverance enough for the purpose. However, if you can but contrive to be tired of reading as soon as I am tired of writing, we shall find that short ones answer just as well; and, in my opinion, this is a very practicable measure.

My friend Colman has had good fortune; I wish him better fortune still; which is, that he may make a right use of it. The tragedies of Lloyd and Bensley are both very deep. If they are not of use to the surviving part of the society, it is their own fault.

I was debtor to Bensley seven pounds, or nine, I forget which. If you can find out his brother, you will do me a great favor if you will pay him for me; but do it at your leisure.

Yours and theirs,*

W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 4, 1765.

Being just emerged from the Ouse, I sit down to thank you, my dear cousin, for your friendly and comfortable letter. What could you think of my unaccountable behavior to you in that visit I mentioned in my last? I remember I neither spoke to you nor looked at you. The solution of the mystery indeed followed soon after, but at the same time it must have been inexplicable. The uproar within was even then begun, and my silence was only the sulkiness of a thunder-storm before it opens. I am glad, however, that the only instance in which I knew not how to value your company was when I was not in my senses. It was the first of the kind, and I trust in God it will be the last.

How naturally does affliction make us Christians! and how impossible it is, when all human help is vain, and the whole earth too poor and trifling to furnish us with one moment's peace—how impossible is it then to avoid looking at the Gospel! It gives me some concern, though at the same time it increases my gratitude, to reflect, that a convert made in Bedlam is more likely to be a stumbling-block to others than to advance their faith. But, if it has that effect upon any, it is owing to their reasoning amiss, and drawing their conclusions from false premises. He who can ascribe an amendment of life and manners and a reformation of the heart itself to madness, is guilty of an absurdity that in any other case would fasten the imputation of madness upon himself; for, by so doing, he ascribes a reasonable effect to an unreasonable cause, and a positive effect to a negative. But, when Christianity only is to be sacrificed, he that stabs deepest is always

* The author is supposed to mean Mrs. Hill and her two daughters. The word *theirs* cannot so well refer to the last antecedent, the persons who stand in that relation with it being both dead at the time he wrote, as is evident from the context.

the wisest man. You, my dear cousin, yourself, will be apt to think I carry the matter too far, and that, in the present warmth of my heart, I make too ample a concession in saying, that I am *only now* a convert. You think I always believed, and I thought so too, but you were deceived, and so was I. I called myself indeed a Christian, but He who knows my heart, knows that I never did a right thing, nor abstained from a wrong one, because I was so. But, if I did either, it was under the influence of some other motive. And it is such seeming Christians, such pretending believers, that do most mischief to the cause, and furnish the strongest arguments to support the infidelity of its enemies: unless profession and conduct go together, the man's life is a lie, and the validity of what he professes itself is called in question. The difference between a Christian and an unbeliever would be so striking, if the treacherous allies of the church would go over at once to the other side, that I am satisfied religion would be no loser by the bargain.

I reckon it one instance of the providence that has attended me throughout this whole event, that, instead of being delivered into the hands of one of the London physicians—who were so much nearer, that I wonder I was not—I was carried to Dr. Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence, but when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind upon the subject without reserve, I could hardly have found a fitter person for the purpose. My eagerness and anxiety to settle my opinions upon that long-neglected point made it necessary, that while my mind was yet weak, and my spirits uncertain, I should have some assistance. The doctor was as ready to administer relief to me in this article likewise, and as well qualified to do it as in that which was more immediately his province. How many physicians would have thought this an irregular appetite and a symptom of remaining madness! But if it were so, my friend was as mad as myself, and it is well for me that he was so.

My dear cousin, you know not half the deliverances I have received; my brother is the only one in the family who does. My recovery is indeed a signal one, but a greater, if possible, went before it. My future life must express my thankfulness, for by words I cannot do it.

I pray God to bless you, and my friend Sir Thomas.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 5, 1765.

My dear Lady Hesketh,—My pen runs so fast you will begin to wish you had not put it in motion, but you must consider we have not met, even by letter, almost these two years, which will account, in some measure, for my pestering you in this manner; besides my last was no answer to yours, and therefore I consider myself as still in your debt. To say truth, I have this long time promised myself a correspondence with you as one of my principal pleasures.

I should have written to you from St. Alban's long since, but was willing to perform quarantine first, both for my own sake, and because I thought my letters would be more satisfactory to you from any other quarter. You will perceive I allowed myself a very sufficient time for the purpose, for I date my recovery from the 25th of last July, having been ill seven months, and well twelve months. It was on that day my brother came to see me; I was far from well when he came in; yet, though he only stayed one day with me, his company served to put to flight a thousand deliriums and delusions which I still labored under, and the next morning found myself a new creature. But to the present purpose.

As far as I am acquainted with this place, I like it extremely. Mr. Hodgson, the minister of the parish, made me a visit the day before yesterday. He is very sensible, a good preacher, and conscientious in the discharge of his duty. He is very well known to Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol, the author of the Treatise on the Prophecies, one of our best bishops, and who has written the most demonstrative proof of the truth of Christianity, in my mind, that ever was published.

There is a village, called Hertford, about a mile and a half from hence. The church there is very prettily situated upon a rising ground, so close to the river that it washes the wall of the churchyard. I found an epitaph there the other morning, the two first lines of which being better than anything else I saw there, I made shift to remember. It is by a widow, on her husband.

"Thou wast too good to live on earth with me,
And I not good enough to die with thee."

The distance of this place from Cambridge is the worst circumstance belonging to it. My brother and I are fifteen miles asunder, which, considering that I came hither for the sake of being near him, is rather too much. I wish that young man was better known in the family. He has as many good qualities as his nearest kindred could wish to find in him.

As Mr. Quin very roundly expressed himself upon some such occasion, "here is very plentiful accommodation, and great happiness

of provision." So that if I starve, it must be through forgetfulness rather than scarcity.

Fare thee well, my good and dear cousin.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

July 12, 1765.

My dear Cousin,—You are very good to me, and if you will only continue to write at such intervals as you find convenient, I shall receive all that pleasure which I proposed to myself from our correspondence. I desire no more than that you would never drop me for any length of time together, for I shall then think you only write because something happened to put you in mind of me, or for some other reason equally mortifying. I am not, however, so unreasonable as to expect you should perform this act of friendship so frequently as myself, for you live in a world swarming with engagements, and my hours are almost all my own. You must every day be employed in doing what is expected from you by a thousand others, and I have nothing to do but what is most agreeable to myself.

Our mentioning Newton's Treatise on the Prophecies brings to my mind an anecdote of Dr. Young, who you know died lately at Welwyn. Dr. Cotton, who was intimate with him, paid him a visit about a fortnight before he was seized with his last illness. The old man was then in perfect health; the antiquity of his person, the gravity of his utterance, and the earnestness with which he discoursed about religion, gave him, in the doctor's eye, the appearance of a prophet. They had been delivering their sentiments upon this book of Newton, when Young closed the conference thus:—"My friend, there are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is built as upon a rock: the fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our religion, are such as human ingenuity could never have invented, therefore they must be divine; the other argument is this. If the prophecies have been fulfilled (of which there is abundant demonstration), the Scripture must be the word of God, and if the Scripture is the word of God, Christianity must be true."

This treatise on the prophecies serves a double purpose; it not only proves the truth of religion, in a manner that never has been, nor ever can be controverted; but it proves likewise, that the Roman Catholic is the apostate, and the anti-Christian church, so frequently foretold both in the Old and New Testaments. Indeed so fatally connected is the refutation of Popery with the truth of Christianity, when the latter is evinced by the completion of the prophecies, that, in proportion as light is thrown upon the one, the deformities and errors of the other are more plainly exhibited. But I leave you to the book itself; there are parts of it which may possibly afford you less entertainment than the rest, because you have never been a school-boy, but in the main it is so interesting, and you are so fond of that which is so, that I am sure you will like it.

My dear cousin, how happy am I in having a friend, to whom I can open my heart upon these subjects! I have many intimates in the world, and have had many more than I shall have hereafter, to whom a long letter upon these most important articles would appear tiresome at least, if not impertinent. But I am not afraid of meeting with that reception from you, who have never yet made it your interest that there should be no truth in the word of God. May this everlasting truth be your comfort while you live, and attend you with peace and joy in your last moments! I love you too well not to make this a part of my prayers; and when I remember my friends on these occasions, there is no likelihood that you can be forgotten.

Yours ever, W. C.

P. S.—Cambridge. I add this postscript at my brother's rooms. He desires to be affectionately remembered to you, and if you are in town about a fortnight hence, when he proposes to be there himself, will take a breakfast with you.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, August 1st, 1765.

My dear Cousin,—If I was to measure your obligation to write by my own desire to hear from you, I should call you an idle correspondent if a post went by without bringing a letter, but I am not so unreasonable; on the contrary, I think myself very happy in hearing from you upon your own terms, as you find most convenient. Your short history of my family is a very acceptable part of your letter; if they really interest themselves in my welfare,* it is a mark of their great charity for one who has been a disappointment and a vexation to them ever since he has been of consequence enough to be either. My friend the major's behavior to me, after all he suffered by my abandoning his interest and my own, in so miserable a manner, is a noble instance of generosity and true greatness of mind: and, indeed, I know no man in whom those qualities are more conspicuous; one need only furnish him with

* Cowper's pecuniary resources had been seriously impaired by his loss of the Clerkship of the Journals in the House of Lords, and by his subsequent resignation of the office of Commissioner of Bankrupts. At the kind instigation of Major Cowper, his friends had been induced to unite in rendering his income more adequate to his necessary annual expenditure.

an opportunity to display them, and they are always ready to show themselves in his words and actions, and even in his countenance, at a moment's warning. I have great reason to be thankful—I have lost none of my acquaintance, but those whom I determined not to keep. I am sorry this class is so numerous. What would I not give that every friend I have in the world were not almost but altogether Christians! My dear cousin, I am half afraid to talk in this style, lest I should seem to indulge a censorious humor, instead of hoping, as I ought, the best for all men. But what can be said against ocular proof, and what is hope when it is built upon presumption? To use the most holy name in the universe for no purpose, or a bad one, contrary to his own express commandment; to pass the day, and the succeeding days, weeks, and months, and years, without one act of private devotion, one confession of our sins, or one thanksgiving for the numberless blessings we enjoy; to hear the word of God in public, with a distracted attention, or with none at all; to absent ourselves voluntarily from the blessed Communion, and to live in the total neglect of it, though our Saviour has charged it upon us with an express injunction—are the common and ordinary liberties which the generality of professors allow themselves; and what is this but to live without God in the world? Many causes may be assigned for this anti-Christian spirit, so prevalent among Christians, but one of the principal I take to be their utter forgetfulness that they have the word of God in their possession.

My friend, Sir William Russel, was distantly related to a very accomplished man, who, though he never believed the Gospel, admired the Scriptures as the sublimest compositions in the world, and read them often. I have been intimate myself with a man of fine taste, who has confessed to me that, though he could not subscribe to the truth of Christianity itself, yet he never could read St. Luke's account of our Saviour's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus without being wonderfully affected by it, and he thought that, if the stamp of divinity was anywhere to be found in Scripture, it was strongly marked and visibly impressed upon that passage. If these men, whose hearts were chilled with the darkness of infidelity, could find such charms in the mere style of the Scripture, what must they find there whose eye penetrates deeper than the letter, and who firmly believe themselves interested in all the valuable privileges of the Gospel? "He that believeth on me is passed from death unto life," though it be as plain a sentence as words can form, has more beauties in it for such a person than all the labors antiquity can boast of. If my poor man of taste, whom I have just mentioned, had searched a little further, he might have found other parts of the sacred history as strongly marked with the characters of divinity, as that he mentioned. The parable of the prodigal son, the most beautiful fiction that ever was invented; our Saviour's speech to his disciples, with which he closes his earthly ministration, full of the sublimest dignity, and tenderest affection; surpass everything that I ever read, and, like the Spirit by which they were dictated, fly directly to the heart. If the Scripture did not disdain all affectation of ornament, one should call these, and such as these, the ornamental parts of it, but the matter of it is that upon which it principally stakes its credit with us, and the style, however excellent and peculiar to itself, is the only one of those many external evidences by which it recommends itself to our belief.

I shall be very much obliged to you for the book you mention; you could not have sent me anything that would have been more welcome, unless you had sent me your own meditations instead of them.

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

August 14th, 1765.

Dear Joe,—Both Lady Hesketh and my brother had apprized me of your intention to give me a call; and herein I find they were both mistaken. But they both informed me, likewise, that you were already set out for Warwickshire; in consequence of which latter intelligence, I have lived in continual expectation of seeing you, any time this fortnight. Now, how these two ingenious personages (for such they are both) should mistake an expedition to French Flanders for a journey to Warwickshire, is more than I, with all my ingenuity, can imagine. I am glad, however, that I have still a chance of seeing you, and shall treasure it up amongst my agreeable expectations. In the meantime, you are welcome to the British shore, as the song has it, and I thank you for your epitome of your travels. You don't tell me how you escaped the vigilance of the custom-house officers, though I dare say you were knuckle-deep in contrabands, and had your boots stuffed with all and all manner of unlawful wares and merchandizes.

You know, Joe, I am very deep in debt to my little physician at St. Albans, and that the handsomest thing I can do will be to pay him *le plutôt qu'il sera possible* (that is vile French, I believe, but you can, now, correct it). My brother informs me that you have such a quantity of cash in your hands on my account, that I may venture to send him forty pounds immediately. This, therefore, I shall

* Private correspondence.

be obliged if you will manage for me; and when you receive the hundred pounds, which my brother likewise brags you are shortly to receive, I shall be glad if you will discharge the remainder of that debt, without waiting for any further advice from your humble servant.

I am become a professed horseman, and do hereby assume to myself the style and title of the Knight of the Bloody Spur. It has cost me much to bring this point to bear; but I think I have at last accomplished it. My love to all your family.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, August 17, 1765.

You told me, my dear cousin, that I need not fear writing too often, and you perceive I take you at your word. At present, however, I shall do little more than thank you for your Meditations, which I admire exceedingly; the author of them manifestly loved the truth with an undissembled affection, had made great progress in the knowledge of it, and experienced all the happiness that naturally results from that noblest of all attainments. There is one circumstance which he gives us frequent occasion to observe in him, which I believe will ever be found in the philosophy of every true Christian. I mean the eminent rank which he assigns to faith among the virtues, as the source and parent of them all. There is nothing more infallibly true than this; and doubtless it is with a view to the purifying and sanctifying nature of a true faith, that our Saviour says "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life," with many other expressions to the same purpose. Considered in this light, no wonder it has the power of salvation ascribed to it. Considered in any other, we must suppose it to operate like an oriental talisman, if it obtains for us the least advantage; which is an affront to Him, who insists upon our having it, and will on no other terms admit us to his favor. I mention this distinguishing article in his Reflections, the rather because it serves for a solid foundation to the distinction I made in my last, between the specious professor and the true believer, between him whose faith is his Sunday suit and him who never puts it off at all—a distinction I am a little fearful sometimes of making, because it is a heavy stroke upon the practice of more than half the Christians in the world.

My dear cousin, I told you I read the book with great pleasure, which may be accounted for from its own merit, but perhaps it pleased me the more because you had travelled the same road before me. You know there is no such pleasure as this, which would want great explanation to some folks, being perhaps a mystery to those whose hearts are a mere muscle, and serve only for the purposes of an even circulation.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Sept. 4th, 1765.

Though I have some very agreeable acquaintance at Huntingdon, my dear cousin, none are so agreeable as the arrival of your letters. I thank you for that which I have just received from Droxford, and particularly for that part of it, where you give me an unlimited liberty upon the subject I have already so often written upon. Whatever interests us deeply, as naturally flows into the pen as it does from the lips, when every restraint is taken away, and we meet with a friend indulgent enough to attend to us. How many, in all that variety of characters with whom I am acquainted, could I find, after the strictest search, to whom I could write as I do to you? I hope the number will increase: I am sure it cannot easily be diminished. Poor ——! I have heard the whole of his history, and can only lament what I am sure I can make no apology for. Two of my friends have been cut off, during my illness, in the midst of such a life as it is frightful to reflect upon, and here am I, in better health and spirits than I can almost remember to have enjoyed before, after having spent months in the apprehension of instant death. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! Why did I receive grace and mercy? Why was I preserved, afflicted for my good, received, as I trust, into favor, and blessed with the greatest happiness I can ever know, or hope for, in this life, while these were overtaken by the great arrest, unawakened, unrepenting, and every way unprepared for it? His infinite wisdom, to whose infinite mercy I owe it all, can solve these questions, and none besides him. If a freethinker, as many a man miscalls himself, could be brought to give a serious answer to them, he would certainly say, "Without doubt, Sir, you were in great danger; you had a narrow escape: a most fortunate one, indeed." How excessively foolish, as well as shocking! As if life depended upon luck, and all that we are or can be, all that we have or hope for, could possibly be referred to accident. Yet to this freedom of thought it is owing that He, who, as our Saviour tells us, is thoroughly apprized of the death of the meanest of his creatures, is supposed to leave those, whom he has made in his own image, to the mercy of chance: and to this therefore it is likewise owing, that the correction which our Heavenly Father bestows upon us, that we may be fitted to receive his blessing, is so

often disappointed of its benevolent intention, and that men despise the chastening of the Almighty. Fevers and all diseases are accidents, and long life, recovery at least from sickness, is the gift of the physician. No man can be a greater friend to the use of means upon these occasions than myself, for it were presumption and enthusiasm to neglect them. God has endued them with salutary properties on purpose that we might avail ourselves of them, otherwise that part of his creation were in vain. But to impute our recovery to the medicine, and to carry our views no further, is to rob God of his honor, and is saying in effect that he has parted with the keys of life and death, and, by giving to a drug the power to heal us, has placed our lives out of his own reach. He that thinks thus, may as well fall upon his knees at once, and return thanks to the medicine that cured him, for it was certainly more instrumental in his recovery than either the apothecary or the doctor. My dear cousin, a firm persuasion of the superintendence of Providence over all our concerns is absolutely necessary to our happiness. Without it, we cannot be said to believe in the Scripture, or practise anything like resignation to his will. If I am convinced that no affliction can befall me without the permission of God, I am convinced likewise that he sees and knows that I am afflicted; believing this, I must, in the same degree, believe that if I pray to him for deliverance he hears me; I must needs know likewise, with equal assurance, that if he hears he will also deliver me, if that will upon the whole be most conducive to my happiness; and, if he does not deliver me, I may be well assured that he has none but the most benevolent intention in declining it. He made us, not because we could add to his happiness, which was always perfect, but that we might be happy ourselves; and will he not, in all his dispensations towards us, even in the minutest, consult that end for which he made us? To suppose the contrary, is (which we are not always aware of) affronting every one of his attributes; and, at the same time, the certain consequence of disbelieving his care for us is that we renounce utterly our dependence upon him. In this view it will appear plainly that the line of duty is not stretched too tight, when we are told that we ought to accept everything at his hands as a blessing, and to be thankful even while we smart under the rod of iron, with which he sometimes rules us. Without this persuasion, every blessing, however we may think ourselves happy in it, loses its greatest recommendation, and every affliction is intolerable. Death itself must be welcome to him who has this faith, and he who has it not must aim at it, if he is not a madman. You cannot think how glad I am to hear you are going to commence lady, and mistress of Freemantle.* I know it well, and could go to it from Southampton blindfold. You are kind to invite me to it, and I shall be so kind to myself as to accept the invitation, though I should not, for a slight consideration, be prevailed upon to quit my beloved retirement at Huntingdon.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Sept. 14, 1765.

My dear Cousin,—The longer I live here, the better I like the place, and the people who belong to it. I am upon very good terms with no less than five families, besides two or three odd scrambling fellows like myself. The last acquaintance I made here is with the race of the Unwins, consisting of father and mother, son and daughter, the most comfortable, social folks you ever knew. The son is about twenty-one years of age, one of the most unreserved and amiable young men I ever conversed with. He is not yet arrived at that time of life when suspicion recommends itself to us in the form of wisdom, and sets everything but our own dear selves at an immeasurable distance from our esteem and confidence. Consequently, he is known almost as soon as seen, and, having nothing in his heart that makes it necessary for him to keep it barred and bolted, opens it to the perusal even of a stranger. The father is a clergyman, and the son is designed for orders. The design however is quite his own, proceeding merely from his being, and having always been, sincere in his belief and love of the Gospel. Another acquaintance I have lately made is with a Mr. Nicholson, a north-country divine, very poor, but very good, and very happy. He reads prayers here twice a-day, all the year round, and travels on foot to serve two churches every Sunday through the year, his journey out and home again being sixteen miles. I supped with him last night. He gave me bread and cheese, and a black jug of ale of his own brewing, and doubtless brewed by his own hands. Another of my acquaintance is Mr. ——, a thin, tall, old man, and as good as he is thin. He drinks nothing but water, and eats no flesh, partly (I believe) from a religious scruple (for he is very religious), and partly in the spirit of a valetudinarian. He is to be met with every morning of his life, at about six o'clock, at a fountain of very fine water, about a mile from the town, which is reckoned extremely like the Bristol spring. Being both early risers, and the only early walkers in the place, we soon became acquainted. His great piety can be equalled by nothing

* Freemantle, a villa near Southampton.

but his great regularity; for he is the most perfect timepiece in the world. I have received a visit likewise from Mr. ——. He is very much a gentleman, well-read, and sensible. I am persuaded, in short, that if I had had the choice of all England where to fix my abode, I could not have chosen better for myself, and most likely I should not have chosen so well.

You say, you hope it is not necessary for salvation to undergo the same afflictions that I have undergone. No! my dear cousin, God deals with his children as a merciful father; he does not, as he himself tells us, afflict willingly the sons of men. Doubtless there are many, who, having been placed by his good providence out of the reach of any great evil and the influence of bad example, have, from their very infancy, been partakers of the grace of his Holy Spirit, in such a manner as never to have allowed themselves in any grievous offence against him. May you love him more and more, day by day, as every day, while you think upon him, you will find him more worthy of your love; and may you be finally accepted by him for his sake whose intercession for all his faithful servants cannot but prevail! Yours ever,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Oct. 10, 1765.

My dear Cousin,—I should grumble at your long silence, if I did not know that one may love one's friends very well, though one is not always in a humor to write to them. Besides, I have the satisfaction of being perfectly sure that you have at least twenty times recollected the debt you owe me, and as often resolved to pay it: and perhaps, while you remain indebted to me, you think of me twice as often as you would do if the account was clear. These are the reflections with which I comfort myself under the affliction of not hearing from you; my temper does not incline me to jealousy, and, if it did, I should set all right by having recourse to what I have already received from you.

I thank God for your friendship, and for every friend I have; for all the pleasing circumstances here; for my health of body, and perfect serenity of mind. To recollect the past, and compare it with the present, is all I have need of to fill me with gratitude; and to be grateful is to be happy. Not that I think myself sufficiently thankful, or that I ever shall be so in this life. The warmest heart perhaps only feels by fits, and is often as insensible as the coldest. This at least is frequently the case with mine, and oftener than it should be. But the mercy that can forgive iniquity will never be severe to mark our frailties; to that mercy, my dear cousin, I commend you, with earnest wishes for your welfare, and remain your ever affectionate

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

I wish you joy, my dear cousin, of being safely arrived in port from the storms of Southampton. For my own part, who am but as a Thames wherry, in a world full of tempest and commotion, I know so well the value of the creek I have put into, and the snugness it affords me, that I have a sensible sympathy with you in the pleasure you find in being once more blown to Droxford. I know enough of Miss Morley to send her my compliments, to which, if I had never seen her, her affection for you would sufficiently entitle her. If I neglected to do it sooner, it is only because I am naturally apt to neglect what I ought to do; and if I was as genteel as I am negligent, I should be the most delightful creature in the universe. I am glad you think so favorably of my Huntingdon acquaintance; they are indeed a nice set of folks, and suit me exactly. I should have been more particular in my account of Miss Unwin, if I had had materials for a minute description. She is about eighteen years of age, rather handsome and genteel. In her mother's company she says little, not because her mother requires it of her, but because she seems glad of that excuse for not talking, being somewhat inclined to bashfulness. There is the most remarkable cordiality between all the parts of the family, and the mother and daughter seem to doat upon each other. The first time I went to the house, I was introduced to the daughter alone; and sat with her near half an hour before her brother came in, who had appointed me to call upon him. Talking is necessary in a *tete-a-tete*, to distinguish the persons of the drama from the chairs they sit on: accordingly, she talked a great deal, and extremely well; and, like the rest of the family, behaved with as much ease and address as if we had been old acquaintance. She resembles her mother in her great piety, who is one of the most remarkable instances of it I have ever seen. They are altogether the cheerfullest and most engaging family-piece it is possible to conceive. Since I wrote the above, I met Mrs. Unwin in the street, and went home with her. She and I walked together near two hours in the garden, and had a conversation which did me more good than I should have received from an audience of the first prince in Europe. That woman is a blessing to me, and I never see her without being the better for her company. I am treated in the family as if I was a near relation, and have been repeatedly invited to call upon them at all times. You

know what a shy fellow I am; I cannot prevail with myself to make so much use of this privilege as I am sure they intend I should, but perhaps this awkwardness will wear off hereafter. It was my earnest request before I left St. Alban's, that wherever it might please Providence to dispose of me, I might meet with such an acquaintance as I find in Mrs. Unwin. How happy it is to believe, with a steadfast assurance, that our petitions are heard, even while we are making them! —and how delightful to meet with a proof of it in the effectual and actual grant of them! Surely it is a gracious finishing given to those means which the Almighty has been pleased to make use of for my conversion. After having been deservedly rendered unfit for any society, to be again qualified for it, and admitted at once into the fellowship of those whom God regards as the excellent of the earth, and whom, in the emphatical language of Scripture, he preserves as the apple of his eye, is a blessing, which carries with it the stamp and visible superscription of divine bounty—a grace unlimited as undeserved; and, like its glorious Author, free in its course, and blessed in its operation!

My dear cousin! health and happiness, and, above all, the favor of our great and gracious Lord attend you! while we seek it in spirit and in truth we are infinitely more secure of it than of the next breath we expect to draw. Heaven and earth have their destined periods; ten thousand worlds will vanish at the consummation of all things; but the word of God standeth fast, and they who trust in him shall never be confounded.

My love to all who inquire after me.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO MAJOR COWPER.

Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

My dear Major,—I have neither lost the use of my fingers nor my memory, though my unaccountable silence might incline you to suspect that I had lost both. The history of those things which have, from time to time, prevented my scribbling would not only be insipid, but extremely voluminous, for which reasons they will not make their appearance at present, nor probably at any time hereafter. If my neglecting to write to you were a proof that I had never thought of you, and that had been really the case, five shillings apiece would have been much too little to give for the sight of such a monster! but I am no such monster, nor do I perceive in myself the least tendency to such a transformation. You may recollect that I had but very uncomfortable expectations of the accommodations I should meet with at Huntingdon. How much better is it to take our lot where it shall please Providence to cast it without anxiety! had I chosen for myself, it is impossible I could have fixed upon a place so agreeable to me in all respects. I so much dreaded the thought of having a new acquaintance to make, with no other recommendation than that of being a perfect stranger, that I heartily wished no creature here might take the least notice of me. Instead of which, in about two months after my arrival, I became known to all the visitable people here, and do verily think it the most agreeable neighborhood I ever saw.

Here are three families who have received me with the utmost civility, and two in particular have treated me with as much cordiality as if their pedigree and mine had grown upon the same sheep-skin. Besides these, there are three or four single men, who suit my temper to a hair. The town is one of the neatest in England; the country is fine for several miles about it; and the roads, which are all turnpike, and strike out four or five different ways, are perfectly good all the year round. I mention this latter circumstance chiefly because my distance from Cambridge has made a horseman of me at last, or at least is likely to do so. My brother and I meet every week, by an alternate reciprocation of intercourse, as Sam Johnson would express it; sometimes I get a lift in a neighbor's chaise, but generally ride. As to my own personal condition, I am much happier than the day is long, and sunshine and candle-light alike see me perfectly contented. I get books in abundance, as much company as I choose, a deal of *comfortable leisure*, and enjoy better health, I think, than for many years past. What is there wanting to make me happy? Nothing, if I can but be as thankful as I ought, and I trust that He, who has bestowed so many blessings upon me, will give me gratitude to crown them all. I beg you will give my love to my dear cousin Maria, and to everybody at the Park. If Mrs. Maitland is with you, as I suspect by a passage in Lady Hesketh's letter to me, pray remember me to her very affectionately. And believe me, my dear friend, ever yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

October 25, 1765.

Dear Joe,—I am afraid the month of October has proved rather unfavorable to the belle assemblée at Southampton, high winds and continual rains being bitter enemies to that agreeable lounge which you and I are equally fond of. I have very cordially betaken myself to my books and my fireside; and seldom leave them unless for exercise. I have added another family to the number

of those I was acquainted with when you were here. Their name is Unwin—the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the ceremonious civility of country gentle-folks as any I ever met with. They treat me more like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me. The old gentleman carries me to Cambridge in his chaise. He is a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as Parson Adams. His wife has a very uncommon understanding, has read much, to excellent purpose, and is more polite than a duchess. The son, who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man, and the daughter quite of a piece with the rest of the family. They see but little company, which suits me exactly; go when I will, I find a house full of peace and cordiality in all its parts, and am sure to hear no scandal, but such discourse instead of it as we are all better for. You remember Rousseau's description of an English morning;* such are the mornings I spend with these good people, and the evenings differ from them in nothing, except that they are still more snug and quieter. Now I know them, I wonder that I liked Huntingdon so well before I knew them, and am apt to think I should find every place disagreeable that had not an Unwin belonging to it.

This incident convinces me of the truth of an observation I have often made, that when we circumscribe our estimate of all that is clever within the limits of our own acquaintance (which I at least have been always apt to do) we are guilty of a very uncharitable censure upon the rest of the world, and of a narrowness of thinking disgraceful to ourselves. Wapping and Redriff may contain some of the most amiable persons living, and such as one would go to Wapping and Redriff to make acquaintance with. You remember Gray's stanza,

> Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
> The deep unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
> Full many a rose is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its fragrance on the desert air.

Yours, dear Joe, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Nov. 5, 1765.

Dear Joe,—I wrote to you about ten days ago,

> Soliciting a quick return of gold,
> To purchase certain horse that likes me well.

Either my letter or your answer to it, I fear, has miscarried. The former, I hope; because a miscarriage of the latter might be attended with bad consequences.

I find it impossible to proceed any longer in my present course without danger of bankruptcy. I have therefore entered into an agreement with the Rev. Mr. Unwin to lodge and board with him. The family are the most agreeable in the world. They live in a special good house, and in a very genteel way. They are all exactly what I would wish them to be, and I know I shall be as happy with them as I can be on this side of the sun. I did not dream of this matter till about five days ago: but now the whole is settled. I shall transfer myself thither as soon as I have satisfied all demands upon me here.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Nov. 8, 1765.

Dear 'Sephus,—Notwithstanding it is so agreeable a thing to read law lectures to the students of Lyons' Inn,† especially to the reader himself, I must beg leave to waive it. Danby Pickering must be the happy man; and I heartily wish him joy of his deputyship. As to the treat, I think if it goes before the lecture, it will be apt to blunt the apprehension of the students; and, if it comes after, it may erase from their memories impressions so newly made. I could wish therefore, that, for their benefit and behoof, this circumstance were omitted. But, if it be absolutely necessary, I hope Mr. Salt, or whoever takes the conduct of it, will see that it be managed with the frugality and temperance becoming so learned a body. I shall be obliged to you if you will present my respects to Mr. Treasurer Salt, and express my concern at the same time that he had the trouble of sending me two letters upon this occasion. The first of them never came to hand.

I shall be obliged to you if you will tell me whether my exchequer is full or empty, and whether the revenue of last year is yet come in, that I may proportion my payments to the exigencies of my affairs.

My dear 'Sephus, give my love to your family, and believe me much obliged to you for your invitation. At present I am in such an unsettled condition, that I can think of nothing but laying the foundation of my future abode at Unwin's. My being admitted there is the effect of the great good nature and friendly turn of that family, who, I have great reason to believe, are as desirous to do me service as they could be after a much longer acquaintance. Let your next, if it comes a week hence, be directed to me there.

The greatest part of the law-books are

* See his Emilius. † Private correspondence.

* Private correspondence.

† The office of readership to this society had been offered to Cowper, but was declined by him.

those which Lord Cowper gave me. Those, and the very few which I bought myself, are all at the major's service.

Stroke Puss's back the wrong way, and it will put her in mind of her master.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, March 6, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—I have for some time past imputed your silence to the cause which you yourself assign for it, viz., to my change of situation; and was even sagacious enough to account for the frequency of your letters to me while I lived alone, from your attention to me in a state of such solitude as seemed to make it an act of particular charity to write to me. I bless God for it, I was happy even then: solitude has nothing gloomy in it if the soul points upwards. St. Paul tells his Hebrew converts, "Ye are come (already come) to Mount Sion—to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant." When this is the case, as surely it was with them, or the Spirit of Truth had never spoken it, there is an end of the melancholy and dulness of life at once. You will not suspect me, my dear cousin, of a design to understand this passage literally. But this however it certainly means, that a lively faith is able to anticipate, in some measure, the joys of that heavenly society which the soul shall actually possess hereafter.

Since I have changed my situation, I have found still greater cause of thanksgiving to the Father of all Mercies. The family with whom I live are Christians, and it has pleased the Almighty to bring me to the knowledge of them, that I may want no means of improvement in that temper and conduct which he is pleased to require in all his servants.

My dear cousin, one half of the Christian world would call this madness, fanaticism, and folly: but are not these things warranted by the word of God, not only in the passages I have cited, but in many others? If we have no communion with God here, surely we can expect none hereafter. A faith that does not place our conversation in heaven; that does not warm the heart and purify it too; that does not, in short, govern our thought, word, and deed, is no faith, nor will it obtain for us any spiritual blessing here or hereafter. Let us see therefore, my dear cousin, that we do not deceive ourselves in a matter of such infinite moment. The world will be ever telling us that we are good enough, and the world will vilify us behind our backs. But it is not the world which tries the heart, that is the prerogative of God alone. My dear cousin, I have often prayed for you behind your back, and now I pray for you to your face. There are many who would not forgive me this wrong, but I have known you so long and so well that I am not afraid of telling you how sincerely I wish for your growth in every Christian grace, in everything that may promote and secure your everlasting welfare.

I am obliged to Mrs. Cowper for the book, which, you perceive, arrived safe. I am willing to consider it as an intimation on her part, that she would wish me to write to her, and shall do it accordingly. My circumstances are rather particular, such as call upon my friends, those, I mean, who are truly such, to take some little notice of me, and will naturally make those who are not such in sincerity, rather shy of doing it. To this I impute the silence of many with regard to me, who, before the affliction that befel me, were ready enough to converse with me.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.*

Huntingdon, March 11, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—I am much obliged to you for Pearsall's Meditations, especially as it furnishes me with an occasion of writing to you, which is all I have waited for. My friends must excuse me if I write to none but those who lay it fairly in my way to do so. The inference I am apt to draw from their silence is, that they wish *me* to be silent too.

I have great reason, my dear cousin, to be thankful to the gracious Providence that conducted me to this place. The lady, in whose house I live, is so excellent a person, and regards me with a friendship so truly Christian, that I could almost fancy my own mother restored to life again, to compensate to me for all the friends I have lost, and all my connections broken. She has a son at Cambridge, in all respects worthy of such a mother, the most amiable young man I ever knew. His natural and acquired endowments are very considerable, and as to his virtues, I need only say that he is a Christian. It ought to be a matter of daily thanksgiving to me that I am admitted into the society of such persons, and I pray God to make me and keep me worthy of them.

Your brother Martin has been very kind to me, having written to me twice in a style which, though it was once irksome to me, to say the least, I now know how to value. I pray God to forgive me the many light things I have both said and thought of him and his labors. Hereafter I shall consider him as a

* The wife of Major Cowper, and sister of the Rev. Martin Madan, minister of Lock Chapel.

burning and a shining light, and as one of those who, having turned many to righteousness, shall shine hereafter as the stars forever and ever.

So much for the state of my heart: as to my spirits, I am cheerful and happy, and, having peace with God, have peace with myself. For the continuance of this blessing I trust to Him who gives it, and they who trust in Him shall never be confounded.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, April 4, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—I agree with you that letters are not essential to friendship, but they seem to be a natural fruit of it, when they are the only intercourse that can be had. And a friendship producing no sensible effects is so like indifference, that the appearance may easily deceive even an acute discerner. I retract however all that I said in my last upon this subject, having reason to suspect that it proceeded from a principle which I would discourage in myself upon all occasions, even a pride that felt itself hurt upon a mere suspicion of neglect. I have so much cause for humility, and so much need of it too, and every little sneaking resentment is such an enemy to it, that I hope I shall never give quarter to anything that appears in the shape of sullenness or self-consequence hereafter. Alas! if my best Friend, who laid down his life for me, were to remember all the instances in which I have neglected him, and to plead them against me in judgment, where should I hide my guilty head in the day of recompense? I will pray therefore for blessings upon my friends, though they cease to be so, and upon my enemies, though they continue such. The deceitfulness of the natural heart is inconceivable; I know well that I passed upon my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious, and, what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian, when I had no faith in Christ, when I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; in short, when I had neither faith, nor love, nor any Christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion instead, evermore springing up in enmity against him. But blessed be God, even the God who is become my salvation, the hail of affliction and rebuke for sin has swept away the refuge of lies. It pleased the Almighty, in great mercy, to set all my misdeeds before me. At length, the storm being past, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded, such as ever attends the gift of living faith in the all-sufficient atonement, and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ. Thus did he break me and bind me up, thus did he wound me and his hands made me whole. My dear Cousin, I make no apology for entertaining you with the history of my conversion, because I know you to be a Christian in the sterling import of the appellation. This is however but a very summary account of the matter, neither would a letter contain the astonishing particulars of it. If we ever meet again in this world, I will relate them to you by word of mouth; if not, they will serve for the subject of a conference in the next, where I doubt not I shall remember and record them with a gratitude better suited to the subject.

Yours, my dear Cousin, affectionately,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, April 17, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—As in matters unattainable by reason and unrevealed in the Scripture, it is impossible to argue at all; so, in matters concerning which reason can only give a probable guess, and the Scripture has made no explicit discovery, it is, though not impossible to argue at all, yet impossible to argue to any certain conclusion. This seems to me to be the very case with the point in question —— reason is able to form many plausible conjectures concerning the possibility of our knowing each other in a future state, and the Scripture has, here and there, favored us with an expression that looks at least like a slight intimation of it; but because a conjecture can never amount to a proof, and a slight intimation cannot be construed into a positive assertion, therefore, I think, we can never come to any absolute conclusion upon the subject. We may, indeed, reason about the plausibility of our conjectures, and we may discuss, with great industry and shrewdness of argument, those passages in the Scripture which seem to favor the opinion: but still, no certain means having been afforded us, no certain end can be attained; and, after all that can be said, it will still be doubtful whether we shall know each other or not.

As to arguments founded upon human reason only, it would be easy to muster up a much greater number on the affirmative side of the question than it would be worth my while to write or yours to read. Let us see, therefore, what the Scripture says, or seems to say, towards the proof of it; and of this kind of argument also I shall insert but a few of those, which seem to me to be the fairest and clearest for the purpose. For, after all, a disputant on either side of this question, is in danger of that censure of our blessed Lord's, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the power of God."

As to parables, I know it has been said in the dispute concerning the intermediate state that they are not argumentative; but, this having been controverted by very wise and good men, and the parable of Dives and Lazarus having been used by such to prove an intermediate state, I see not why it may not be as fairly used for the proof of any other matter which it seems fairly to imply. In this parable we see that Dives is represented as knowing Lazarus, and Abraham as knowing them both, and the discourse between them is entirely concerning their respective characters and circumstances upon earth. Here, therefore, our Saviour seems to countenance the notion of a mutual knowledge and recollection; and, if a soul that has perished shall know the soul that is saved, surely the heirs of salvation shall know and recollect each other.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, the second chapter, and nineteenth verse, Saint Paul says, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy."

As to the hope which the apostle had formed concerning them, he himself refers the accomplishment of it to the coming of Christ, meaning that then he should receive the recompence of his labors in their behalf; his joy and glory he refers likewise to the same period, both which would result from the sight of such numbers redeemed by the blessing of God upon his ministration, when he should present them before the great Judge, and say, in the words of a greater than himself, "Lo! I and the children whom thou hast given me." This seems to imply that the apostle should know the converts, and the converts the apostle, at least at the day of judgment, and, if then, why not afterwards?

See also the fourth chapter of that epistle, verses 13, 14, 16, which I have not room to transcribe. Here the apostle comforts them under their affliction for their deceased brethren, exhorting them "not to sorrow as without hope:" and what is the hope, by which he teaches them to support their spirits? Even this, "That them which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him." In other words, and by a fair paraphrase surely, telling them they are only taken from them for a season, and that they should receive them at their resurrection.

If you can take off the force of these texts, my dear cousin, you will go a great way towards shaking my opinion: if not, I think they must go a great way towards shaking yours.

The reason why I did not send you my opinion of Pearsall was, because I had not then read him; I have read him since, and like him much, especially the latter part of him; but you have whetted my curiosity to see the last letter by tearing it out; unless you can give me a good reason why I should not see it, I shall inquire for the book the first time I go to Cambridge. Perhaps I may be partial to Hervey for the sake of his other writings, but I cannot give Pearsall the preference to him, for I think him one of the most scriptural writers in the world.

Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, April 18, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—Having gone as far as I thought needful to justify the opinion of our meeting and knowing each other hereafter, I find upon reflection that I have done but half my business, and that one of the questions you proposed remains entirely unconsidered, viz., "Whether the things of our present state will not be of too low and mean a nature to engage our thoughts or make a part of our communications in heaven."

The common and ordinary occurrences of life, no doubt, and even the ties of kindred and of all temporal interests, will be entirely discarded from amongst that happy society, and, possibly, even the remembrance of them done away. But it does not therefore follow that our spiritual concerns, even in this life, will be forgotten, neither do I think, that they can ever appear trifling to us, in any the most distant period of eternity. God, as you say, in reference to the Scripture, will be all in all. But does not that expression mean that, being admitted to so near an approach to our heavenly Father and Redeemer, our whole nature, the soul, and all its faculties, will be employed in praising and adoring him? Doubtless, however, this will be the case, and if so, will it not furnish out a glorious theme of thanksgiving to recollect "the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged?"—to recollect the time, when our faith, which, under the tuition and nurture of the Holy Spirit, has produced such a plentiful harvest of immortal bliss, was as a grain of mustard seed, small in itself, promising but little fruit, and producing less?—to recollect the various attempts that were made upon it, by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and its various triumphs over all, by the assistance of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ! At present, whatever our convictions may be of the sinfulness and corruption of our nature, we can make but a very imperfect estimate either of our weakness or our guilt. Then, no doubt, we shall understand the full value of the wonderful salvation wrought out for us: and it seems reasonable to suppose that, in order to form a just idea of our redemption, we shall

be able to form a just one of the danger we have escaped; when we know how weak and frail we are, surely we shall be more able to render due praise and honor to his strength who fought for us; when we know completely the hatefulness of sin in the sight of God, and how deeply we were tainted by it, we shall know how to value the blood by which we were cleansed as we ought. The twenty-four elders, in the fifth of the Revelations, give glory to God for their redemption out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. This surely implies a retrospect to their respective conditions upon earth, and that each remembered out of what particular kindred and nation he had been redeemed, and, if so, then surely the minutest circumstance of their redemption did not escape their memory. They who triumph over the Beast, in the fifteenth chapter, sing the song of Moses, the servant of God; and what was that song? A sublime record of Israel's deliverance and the destruction of her enemies in the Red Sea, typical, no doubt, of the song which the redeemed in Sion shall sing to celebrate their own salvation and the defeat of their spiritual enemies. This again implies a recollection of the dangers they had before encountered, and the supplies of strength and ardor they had, in every emergency, received from the great Deliverer out of all. These quotations do not, indeed, prove that their warfare upon earth includes a part of their converse with each other; but they prove that it is a theme not unworthy to be heard, even before the throne of God, and therefore it cannot be unfit for reciprocal communication.

But you doubt whether there is *any* communication between the blessed at all, neither do I recollect any Scripture that proves it, or that bears any relation to the subject. But reason seems to require it so peremptorily, that a society without social intercourse seems to be a solecism and a contradiction in terms; and the inhabitants of those regions are called, you know, in Scripture, an innumerable *company*, and an *assembly*, which seems to convey the idea of society as clearly as the word itself. Human testimony weighs but little in matters of this sort, but let it have all the weight it can. I know no greater names in divinity than Watts and Doddridge: they were both of this opinion, and I send you the words of the latter.

"Our *companions in glory* may probably assist us by their wise and good observations, when we come to make the *providence of God* here upon earth, under the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *subject of our mutual converse*."

Thus, my dear cousin, I have spread out my reasons before you for an opinion, which, whether admitted or denied, affects not the state or interest of our soul. May our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, conduct us into his own Jerusalem, where there shall be no night, neither any darkness at all, where we shall be free, even from innocent error, and perfect in the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, Sept. 3, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—It is reckoned, you know, a great achievement to silence an opponent in disputation, and your silence was of so long a continuance, that I might well begin to please myself with the apprehension of having accomplished so arduous a matter. To be serious, however, I am not sorry that what I have said concerning our knowledge of each other in a future state has a little inclined you to the affirmative. For though the redeemed of the Lord shall be sure of being as happy in that state as infinite power employed by infinite goodness can make them, and therefore it may seem immaterial whether we shall, or shall not, recollect each other hereafter; yet our present happiness at least is a little interested in the question. A parent, a friend, a wife, must needs, I think, feel a little heart-ache at the thought of an eternal separation from the objects of her regard: and not to know them when she meets them in another life, or never to meet them at all, amounts, though not altogether, yet nearly to the same thing. Remember them, I think she needs must. To hear that they are happy, will indeed be no small addition to her own felicity; but to see them so will surely be a greater. Thus, at least, it appears to our present human apprehension; consequently, therefore, to think that, when we leave them, we lose them forever; that we must remain eternally ignorant whether they that were flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, partake with us of celestial glory, or are disinherited of their heavenly portion, must shed a dismal gloom over all our present connections. For my own part, this life is such a momentary thing, and all its interests have so shrunk in my estimation, since, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I became attentive to the things of another; that, like a worm in the bud of all my friendships and affections, this very thought would eat out the heart of them all had I a thousand; and were their date to terminate with this life, I think I should have no inclination to cultivate and improve such a fugitive business. Yet friendship is necessary to our happiness here, and, built upon Christian principles, upon which only it can stand, is a

thing even of religious sanction—for what is that love which the Holy Spirit, speaking by St. John, so much inculcates, but friendship? —the only love which deserves the name—a love which can toil, and watch, and deny itself, and go to death for its brother. Worldly friendships are a poor weed compared with this, and even this union of spirit in the bond of peace would suffer, in my mind at least, could I think it were only coeval with our earthly mansions. It may possibly argue great weakness in me, in this instance, to stand so much in need of future hopes to support me in the discharge of present duty. But so it is: I am far, I know, very far, from being perfect in Christian love or any other Divine attainment, and am therefore unwilling to forego whatever may help me in my progress.

You are so kind as to inquire after my health, for which reason I must tell you, what otherwise would not be worth mentioning, that I have lately been just enough indisposed to convince me that not only human life in general, but mine in particular, hangs by a slender thread. I am stout enough in appearance, yet a little illness demolishes me. I have had a severe shake, and the building is not so firm as it was. But I bless God for it, with all my heart. If the inner man be but strengthened, day by day, as I hope, under the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, it will be, no matter how soon the outward is dissolved. He who has, in a manner, raised me from the dead, in a literal sense, has given me the grace, I trust, to be ready at the shortest notice to surrender up to him that life which I have twice received from him. Whether I live or die, I desire it may be to his glory, and it must be to my happiness. I thank God that I have those amongst my kindred to whom I can write, without reserve, my sentiments upon this subject, as I do to you. A letter upon any other subject is more insipid to me than ever my task was when a school-boy, and I say not this in vain glory, God forbid! but to show you what the Almighty, whose name I am unworthy to mention, has done for me, the chief of sinners. Once he was a terror to me, and his service, O what a weariness it was! Now I can say, I love him and his holy name, and am never so happy as when I speak of his mercies to me. Yours, dear Cousin,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, Oct. 2?, 1766.

My dear Cousin,—I am very sorry for poor Charles's illness, and hope you will soon have cause to thank God for his complete recovery. We have an epidemical fever in this country likewise, which leaves behind it a continual sighing, almost to suffocation: not that I have seen any instance of it, for, blessed be God! our family have hitherto escaped it, but such was the account I heard of it this morning.

I am obliged to you for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your inquiring so particularly after the manner in which my time passes here. As to amusements, I mean what the world calls such, we have none: the place indeed swarms with them; and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the *gentle* inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessories to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we *do not* spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven, we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and, by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord, make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse, as before, till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon; and, last of all, the family are called to prayers. I need not tell *you* that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness: accordingly, we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren. Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her, and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our salvation for such companions, and for such a life, above all for a heart to like it!

I have had many anxious thoughts about taking orders, and I believe every new convert is apt to think himself called upon for that purpose; but it has pleased God, by

means which there is no need to particularize, to give me full satisfaction as to the propriety of declining it; indeed, they who have the least idea of what I have suffered from the dread of public exhibitions will readily excuse my never attempting them hereafter. In the meantime, if it please the Almighty, I may be an instrument of turning many to the truth, in a private way, and hope that my endeavors in this way have not been entirely unsuccessful. Had I the zeal of Moses, I should want an Aaron to be my spokesman.

Yours ever, my dear Cousin,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, March 11, 1767.

My dear Cousin,—To find those whom I love, clearly and strongly persuaded of evangelical truth, gives me a pleasure superior to any this world can afford me. Judge, then, whether your letter, in which the body and substance of a saving faith is so evidently set forth, could meet with a lukewarm reception at my hands, or be entertained with indifference! Would you know the true reason of my long silence? Conscious that my religious principles are generally excepted against, and that the conduct they produce, wherever they are heartily maintained, is still more the object of disapprobation than those principles themselves, and remembering that I had made both the one and the other known to you, without having any clear assurance that our faith in Jesus was of the same stamp and character, I could not help thinking it possible that you might disapprove both my sentiments and practice; that you might think the one unsupported by Scripture, and the other whimsical, and unnecessarily strict and rigorous, and consequently would be rather pleased with the suspension of a correspondence, which a different way of thinking upon so momentous a subject as that we wrote upon was likely to render tedious and irksome to you.

I have told you the truth from my heart; forgive me these injurious suspicions, and never imagine that I shall hear from you upon this delightful theme without a real joy, or without prayer to God to prosper you in the way of his truth, his sanctifying and saving truth. The book you mention lies now upon my table. Marshall* is an old acquaintance of mine; I have both read him and heard him read, with pleasure and edification. The doctrines he maintains are, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, the very life of my soul and the soul of all my happiness; that Jesus is a *present* Saviour from the guilt of sin, by his most precious blood, and from the power of it by his Spirit; that, corrupt and wretched in ourselves, in Him, and in *Him only*, we are complete; that being united to Jesus by a lively faith, we have a solid and eternal interest in his obedience and sufferings to justify us before the face of our heavenly Father, and that all this inestimable treasure, the earnest of which is in grace, and its consummation in glory, is given, freely *given*, to us of God; in short, that he hath opened the kingdom of heaven *to all believers:* these are the truths which, by the grace of God, shall ever be dearer to me than life itself; shall ever be placed next my heart, as the throne whereon the Saviour himself shall sit, to sway all its motions, and reduce that world of iniquity and rebellion to a state of filial and affectionate obedience to the will of the most Holy.

These, my dear cousin, are the truths to which by nature we are enemies: they debase the sinner, and exalt the Saviour, to a degree which the pride of our hearts (till almighty grace subdues them) is determined never to allow. May the Almighty reveal his Son in our hearts, continually, more and more, and teach us to increase in love towards him continually, for having *given* us the unspeakable riches of Christ.

Yours faithfully, W. C.

* "Marshall on Sanctification." This book is distinguished by profound and enlarged views of the subject on which it treats. It was strongly recommended by the pious Hervey, whose testimony to its merits is prefixed to the work.

TO MRS. COWPER.

March 14, 1767.

My dear Cousin,—I just add a line, by way of postscript to my last, to apprize you of the arrival of a very dear friend of mine at the Park, on Friday next, the son of Mr. Unwin, whom I have desired to call on you in his way from London to Huntingdon. If you knew him as well as I do, you would love him as much. But I leave the young man to speak for himself, which he is very able to do. He is ready possessed of an answer to every question you can possibly ask concerning me, and knows my *whole story* from first to last. I give you this previous notice, because I know you are not fond of strange faces, and because I thought it would, in some degree, save him the pain of announcing himself.

I am become a great florist and shrub-doctor. If the major can make up a small packet of seeds, that will make a figure in a garden, where we have little else besides jessamine and honeysuckle; such a packet I mean as may be put into one's fob, I will promise to take great care of them, as I ought to value natives of the Park. They must not be such, however, as require great skill in the

management, for at present I have no skill to spare.

I think Marshall one of the best writers, and the most spiritual expositor of Scripture I ever read. I admire the strength of his argument, and the clearness of his reasonings, upon those parts of our most holy religion which are generally least understood (even by real Christians), as masterpieces of the kind. His section upon the union of the soul with Christ is an instance of what I mean, in which he has spoken of a most mysterious truth, with admirable perspicuity and with great good sense, making it all the while subservient to his main purport, of proving holiness to be the fruit and effect of faith.

I subjoin thus much upon that author, because, though you desired my opinion of him, I remember that in my last I rather left you to find it out by inference than expressed it, as I ought to have done. I never met with a man who understood the plan of salvation better, or was more happy in explaining it.

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, April 3, 1767.

My dear Cousin,—You sent my friend Unwin home to us charmed with your kind reception of him, and with everything he saw at the Park. Shall I once more give you a peep into my vile and deceitful heart? What motive do you think lay at the bottom of my conduct, when I desired him to call upon you? I did not suspect, at first, that pride and vain-glory had any share in it, but quickly after I had recommended the visit to him, I discovered in that fruitful soil the very root of the matter. You know I am a stranger here: all such are suspected characters, unless they bring their credentials with them. To this moment, I believe, it is matter of speculation in the place whence I came and to whom I belong.

Though my friend, you may suppose, before I was admitted an inmate here, was satisfied that I was not a mere vagabond, and has, since that time, received more convincing proofs of my *sponsibility*, yet I could not resist the opportunity of furnishing him with ocular demonstration of it, by introducing him to one of my most splendid connections; that when he hears me called, "*That fellow Cowper*," which has happened heretofore, he may be able, upon unquestionable evidence, to assert my gentlemanhood, and relieve me from the weight of that opprobrious appellation. O Pride! Pride! it deceives with the subtlety of a serpent, and seems to walk erect, though it crawls upon the earth. How will it twist and twine itself about, to get from under the cross, which it is the glory of our Christian calling to be able to bear with patience and good will! They who can guess at the heart of a stranger, and you especially, who are of a compassionate temper, will be more ready, perhaps, to excuse me, in this instance, than I can be to excuse myself. But, in good truth, it was abominable pride of heart, indignation, and vanity, and deserves no better name. How should such a creature be admitted into those pure and sinless mansions, where nothing shall enter that defileth, did not the blood of Christ, applied by the hand of faith, take away the guilt of sin, and leave no spot or stain behind it? Oh what continual need have I of an Almighty, All-sufficient Saviour? I am glad you are acquainted so *particularly* with *all* the circumstances of my story, for I know that your secrecy and discretion may be trusted with anything. A thread of mercy ran through all the intricate maze of those afflictive providences, so mysterious to myself at the time, and which must ever remain so to all who will not see what was the great design of them; at the judgment-seat of Christ the whole shall be laid open. How is the rod of iron changed into a sceptre of love!

I thank you for the seeds: I have committed some of each sort to the ground, whence they will spring up like so many mementoes to remind me of my friends at the Park.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

June 16, 1767.

Dear Joe,—This part of the world is not productive of much news, unless the coldness of the weather be so, which is excessive for the season. We expect, or rather experience a warm contest between the candidates for the county; the preliminary movements of bribery, threatening, and drunkenness, being already taken. The Sandwich interest seems to shake, though both parties are very sanguine. Lord Carysfort is supposed to be in great jeopardy, though as yet, I imagine, a clear judgment cannot be formed; for a man may have all the noise on his side and yet lose his election. You know me to be an uninterested person, and I am sure I am a very ignorant one in things of this kind. I only wish it was over, for it occasions the most detestable scene of profligacy and riot that can be imagined.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, July 13, 1767.

My dear Cousin,—The newspaper has told you the truth. Poor Mr. Unwin, being flung from his horse as he was going to his church

* Private correspondence.

on Sunday morning, received a dreadful fracture on the back part of the skull, under which he languished till Thursday evening, and then died. This awful dispensation has left an impression upon our spirits which will not be presently worn off. He died in a poor cottage, to which he was carried immediately after his fall, about a mile from home, and his body could not be brought to his house till the spirit was gone to him who gave it. May it be a lesson to us to watch, since we know not the day, nor the hour, when our Lord cometh!

The effect of it upon my circumstances will only be a change of the place of my abode. For I shall still, by God's leave, continue with Mrs. Unwin, whose behavior to me has always been that of a mother to a son. We know not where we shall settle, but we trust that the Lord, whom we seek, will go before us and prepare a rest for us. We have employed our friend Haweis,* Dr. Conyers,† of Helmsley, in Yorkshire, and Mr. Newton, of Olney, to look out a place for us, but at present are entirely ignorant under which of the three we shall settle, or whether under either. I have written to my aunt Madan, to desire Martin to assist us with his inquiries. It is probable we shall stay here till Michaelmas.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

July 16, 1767.

Dear Joe,—Your wishes that the newspaper may have misinformed you are vain. Mr. Unwin is dead, and died in the manner there mentioned. At nine o'clock on Sunday morning he was in perfect health, and as likely to live twenty years as either of us, and before ten was stretched speechless and senseless upon a flock bed, in a poor cottage, where (it being impossible to remove him) he died on Thursday evening. I heard his dying groans, the effect of great agony, for he was a strong man, and much convulsed in his last moments. The few short intervals of sense that were indulged him he spent in earnest prayer, and in expressions of a firm trust and confidence in the only Saviour. To that stronghold we must all resort at last, if we would have hope in our death; when every other refuge fails, we are glad to fly to the only shelter to which we can repair to any purpose; and happy is it for us, when, the false ground we have chosen for ourselves being broken under us, we find ourselves obliged to have recourse to the rock which can never be shaken; when this is our lot, we receive great and undeserved mercy.

Our society will not break up, but we shall settle in some other place, where, is at present uncertain.

Yours, W. C.

These tender and confidential letters describe, in the clearest light, the singularly peaceful and devout life of this amiable writer, during his residence at Huntingdon, and the melancholy accident which occasioned his removal to a distant county. Time and providential circumstances now introduced to the notice of Cowper, the zealous and venerable friend who became his intimate associate for many years, after having advised and assisted him in the important concern of fixing his future residence. The Rev. John Newton, then curate of Olney, in Buckinghamshire, had been requested by the late Dr. Conyers (who, in taking his degree in divinity at Cambridge, had formed a friendship with young Mr. Unwin, and learned from him the religious character of his mother) to seize an opportunity, as he was passing through Huntingdon, of making a visit to that exemplary lady. This visit (so important in its consequences to the future history of Cowper) happened to take place within a few days after the calamitous death of Mr. Unwin. As a change of scene appeared desirable both to Mrs. Unwin and to the interesting recluse whom she had generously requested to continue under her care, Mr. Newton offered to assist them in removing to the pleasant and picturesque county in which he resided. They were willing to enter into the flock of a pious and devoted pastor, whose ideas were so much in harmony with their own. He engaged for them a house at Olney, where they arrived on the 14th of October, 1767. He thus alludes to

* Dr. Haweis was a leading character in the religious world at this time, and subsequently the superintendent of Lady Huntingdon's chapels, and of the Seminary for Students founded by that lady. His principal works are a "Commentary on the Bible," and "History of the Church."

† Dr. Conyers. The circumstances attending the death of this truly pious and eminent servant of God are too affecting not to be deemed worthy of being recorded. He had ascended the pulpit of St. Paul's, Deptford, of which he was rector, and had just delivered his text, "Ye shall see my face no more," when he was seized with a sudden fainting, and fell back in his pulpit: he recovered, however, sufficiently to proceed with his sermon, and to give the concluding blessing, when he again fainted away, was carried home, and expired without a groan, in the sixty-second year of his age, 1786. The affecting manner of his death is thus happily adverted to in the following beautiful lines:—

Sent by their Lord on purposes of grace,
Thus angels do his will, and see his face;
With outspread wings they stand, prepar'd to soar,
Declare their message, and are seen no more.

Underneath is a Latin inscription, of which the following is the translation.

I have sinned.
I repented. I believed.
I have loved. I rest.
I shall rise again.
And, by the grace of Christ,
However unworthy,
I shall reign.

his new residence in the following extract of a letter to Mr. Hill.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, October 20, 1767.

I have no map to consult at present, but, by what remembrance I have of the situation of this place in the last I saw, it lies at the northernmost point of the county. We are just five miles beyond Newport Pagnell. I am willing to suspect that you make this inquiry with a *view* to an *interview*, when time shall serve. We may possibly be settled in our own house in about a month, where so good a friend of mine will be extremely welcome to Mrs. Unwin. We shall have a bed and a warm fire-side at your service, if you can come before next summer; and if not, a parlor that looks the north wind full in the face, where you may be as cool as in the groves of Valambrosa.

Yours, my dear Sephus,
Affectionately ever, W. C.

It would have been difficult to select a situation apparently more suited to the existing circumstances and character of Cowper than the scene to which he was now transferred. In Mr. Newton were happily united the qualifications of piety, fervent, rational, and cheerful—the kind and affectionate feelings that inspire friendship and regard—a solid judgment, and a refined taste—the power to edify and please, and the grace that knows how to improve it to the highest ends. He lived in the midst of a flock who loved and esteemed him, and who saw in his ministrations the credentials of heaven, and in his life the exemplification of the doctrines that he taught.

The time of Cowper, in his new situation, seems to have been chiefly devoted to religious contemplation, to social prayer, and to active charity. To this first of Christian virtues, his heart was eminently inclined, and Providence very graciously enabled him to exercise and enjoy it to an extent far superior to what his own scanty fortune allowed means. The death of his father, 1756, failed to place him in a state of independence, and the singular cast of his own mind was such, that nature seemed to have rendered it impossible for him either to covet or to acquire riches. His happy exemption from worldly passions is forcibly displayed in the following letter.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, June 16, 1768.

Dear Joe,—I thank you for so full an answer to so empty an epistle. If Olney furnished anything for your amusement, you should have it in return, but occurrences here are as scarce as cucumbers at Christmas.

I visited St. Alban's about a fortnight since in person, and I visit it every day in thought. The recollection of what passed there, and the consequences that followed it, fill my mind continually, and make the circumstances of a poor, transient, half-spent life, so insipid and unaffecting, that I have no heart to think or write much about them. Whether the nation is worshipping Mr. Wilkes, or any other idol, is of little moment to one who hopes and believes that he shall shortly stand in the presence of the great and blessed God. I thank him that he has given me such a deep, impressed, persuasion of this awful truth as a thousand worlds would not purchase from me. It gives me a relish to every blessing, and makes every trouble light.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

In entering on the correspondence of the ensuing year, we find the following impressive letter addressed to Mr. Hill.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Jan. 21, 1769.

Dear Joe,—I rejoice with you in your recovery, and that you have escaped from the hands of one from whose hands you will not always escape. Death is either the most formidable, or the most comfortable thing we have in prospect, on this side of eternity. To be brought near to him, and to discern neither of these features in his face, would argue a degree of insensibility, of which I will not suspect my friend, whom I know to be a thinking man. You have been brought down to the side of the grave, and you have been raised again by Him who has the keys of the invisible world: who opens and none can shut, who shuts and none can open. I do not forget to return thanks to Him on your behalf, and to pray that your life, which he has spared, may be devoted to his service. "Behold! I stand at the door and knock," is the word of Him, on whom both our mortal and immortal life depend, and, blessed be his name, it is the word of one who wounds only that he may heal, and who waits to be gracious. The language of every such dispensation is, "Prepare to meet thy God." It speaks with the voice of mercy and goodness, for, without such notices, whatever preparation we might make for other events, we should make none for this. My dear friend, I desire and pray that, when this last enemy shall come to execute an *unlimited* commission upon us, we may be found ready, being established and rooted in a well-grounded faith in His name, who conquered and triumphed over him upon his cross.

Yours ever, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Jan. 29, 1769.

My dear Joe,—I have a moment to spare, to tell you that your letter is just come to hand, and to thank you for it. I do assure you, the gentleness and candor of your manner engages my affection to you very much. You answer with mildness to an admonition, which would have provoked many to anger. I have not time to add more, except just to hint that, if I am ever enabled to look forward to death with comfort, which, I thank God, is sometimes the case with me, I do not take my view of it from the top of my own works and deservings, though God is witness that the labor of my life is to keep a conscience void of offence towards Him. He is always formidable to me, but when I see him disarmed of his sting, by having sheathed it in the body of Christ Jesus.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, July 31, 1769.

Dear Joe,—Sir Thomas crosses the Alps, and Sir Cowper, for that is his title at Olney, prefers his home to any other spot of earth in the world. Horace, observing this difference of temper in different persons, cried out a good many years ago, in the true spirit of poetry, "How much one man differs from another!" This does not seem a very sublime exclamation in English, but I remember we were taught to admire it in the original.

My dear friend, I am obliged to you for your invitation: but being long accustomed to retirement, which I was always fond of, I am now more than ever unwilling to revisit those noisy and crowded scenes, which I never loved, and which I now abhor. I remember you with all the friendship I ever professed, which is as much as ever I entertained for any man. But the strange and uncommon incidents of my life have given an entire new turn to my whole character and conduct, and rendered me incapable of receiving pleasure from the same employments and amusements of which I could readily partake in former days.

I love you and yours, I thank you for your continued remembrance of me, and shall not cease to be their and your

Affectionate friend and servant,

W. C.

Cowper's present retirement was distinguished by many private acts of beneficence, and his exemplary virtue was such that the opulent sometimes delighted to make him their almoner. In his sequestered life at Olney, he ministered abundantly to the wants of the poor, from a fund with which he was supplied by that model of extensive and unostentatious philanthropy, the late John Thornton, Esq., whose name he has immortalized in his Poem on Charity, still honoring his memory by an additional tribute to his virtues in the following descriptive eulogy, written immediately on his decease, in the year 1790.

Poets attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the Author of all good in man;
And next commemorating worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.

Thee therefore of commercial fame, but more
Fam'd for thy probity, from shore to shore—
Thee, Thornton, worthy in some page to shine
As honest and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee;
Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous when they die.

What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing woe
Suffer'd by virtue combating below! [means
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food.
Av'rice in thee was the desire of wealth
By rust unperishable, or by stealth
And, if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint have given:
And though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution, boundless, of thy own;
And still, by motives of religious force,
Impell'd thee more to that heroic course;
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temp'rate heat;
And, though in act unwearied, secret still,
As, in some solitude, the summer rill
Refreshes where it winds, the faded green.
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.

Such was thy charity; no sudden start,
After long sleep of passion in the heart,
But stedfast principle, and in its kind
Of close alliance with th' eternal mind;
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him, whose works bespeak his nature, love.
Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee.

This simple and sublime eulogy was a just tribute of respect to the memory of this distinguished philanthropist; and, among the happiest actions of this truly liberal man, we may reckon his furnishing to a character so

* Private correspondence.

reserved and so retired as Cowper the means of enjoying the gratification of active and costly beneficence; a gratification in which the sequestered poet had delighted to indulge, before his acquaintance with Mr. Newton afforded him an opportunity of being concerned in distributing the private, yet extensive, bounty of an opulent and exemplary merchant.

Cowper, before he quitted St. Alban's, assumed the charge of a necessitous child, to extricate him from the perils of being educated by very profligate parents; he sent him to a school at Huntingdon, transferred him, on his removal, to Olney, and finally settled him as an apprentice at Oundle, in Northamptonshire.

The warm, benevolent, and cheerful piety of Mr. Newton, induced his friend Cowper to participate so abundantly in his parochial plans and engagements, that the poet's time and thoughts were more and more engrossed by devotional objects. He became a valuable auxiliary to a faithful parish priest, superintended the religious exercises of the poor, and engaged in an important undertaking, to which we shall shortly have occasion to advert.

But in the midst of these pious duties he forgot not his distant friends, and particularly his amiable relation and correspondent, of the Park-house, near Hertford. The following letter to that lady has no date, but it was probably written soon after his establishment at Olney. The remarkable memento in the postscript was undoubtedly introduced to counteract an idle rumor, arising from the circumstance of his having settled himself under the roof of a female friend, whose age and whose virtues he considered to be sufficient securities to ensure her reputation as well as his own.

TO MRS. COWPER.

My dear Cousin,—I have not been behindhand in reproaching myself with neglect, but desire to take shame to myself for my unprofitableness in this, as well as in all other respects. I take the next immediate opportunity, however, of thanking you for yours, and of assuring you that, instead of being surprised at your silence, I rather wonder that you or any of my friends have any room left for so careless and negligent a correspondent in your memories. I am obliged to you for the intelligence you send me of my kindred, and rejoice to hear of their welfare. He who settles the bounds of our habitations has at length cast our lot at a great distance from each other, but I do not therefore forget their former kindness to me, or cease to be interested in their well being. You live in the centre of a world I know you do not delight in. Happy are you, my dear friend, in being able to discern the insufficiency of all it can afford to fill and satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. That God who created us for the enjoyment of himself, has determined in mercy that it shall fail us here, in order that the blessed result of our inquiries after happiness in the creature may be a warm pursuit and a close attachment to our true interests, in fellowship and communion with Him, through the name and mediation of a dear Redeemer. I bless his goodness and grace that I have any reason to hope I am a partaker with you in the desire after better things than are to be found in a world polluted with sin, and therefore devoted to destruction. May He enable us both to consider our present life in its only true light, as an opportunity put into our hands to glorify him amongst men by a conduct suited to his word and will. I am miserably defective in this holy and blessed art, but I hope there is at the bottom of all my sinful infirmities a sincere desire to live just so long as I may be enabled, in some poor measure, to answer the end of my existence in this respect, and then to obey the summons and attend him in a world where they who are his servants here shall pay him an unsinful obedience forever. Your dear mother is too good to me, and puts a more charitable construction upon my silence than the fact will warrant. I am not better employed than I should be in corresponding with her. I have that within which hinders me wretchedly in everything that I ought to do, and is prone to trifle, and let time and every good thing run to waste. I hope however to write to her soon.

My love and best wishes attend Mr. Cowper, and all that inquire after me. May God be with you, to bless you and to do you good by all his dispensations; do not forget me when you are speaking to our best Friend before his mercy seat.

Yours ever, W. C.

N. B. *I am not married.*

In the year 1769, the lady to whom the preceding letters are addressed was involved in domestic affliction; and the following, which the poet wrote to her on the occasion, is so full of genuine piety and true pathos, that it would be an injury to his memory to suppress it.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Olney, Aug. 31, 1769.

My dear Cousin,—A letter from your brother Frederick brought me yesterday the most afflicting intelligence that has reached me these many years. I pray to God to comfort you, and to enable you to sustain

this heavy stroke with that resignation to his will which none but Himself can give, and which he gives to none but his own children. How blessed and happy is your lot, my dear friend, beyond the common lot of the greater part of mankind: that you know what it is to draw near to God in prayer, and are acquainted with a throne of grace! You have resources in the infinite love of a dear Redeemer which are withheld from millions: and the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus, are sufficient to answer all your necessities, and to sweeten the bitterest cup which your heavenly Father will ever put into your hand. May He now give you liberty to drink at these wells of salvation, till you are filled with consolation and peace in the midst of trouble. He has said, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."* You have need of such a word as this, and he knows your need of it, and the time of necessity is the time when he will be sure to appear in behalf of those who trust in him. I bear you and yours upon my heart before him night and day, for I never expect to hear of distress which shall call upon me with a louder voice to pray for the sufferer. I know the Lord hears me for myself, vile and sinful as I am, and believe, and am sure, that he will hear me for you also. He is the friend of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, even God in his holy habitation; in all our afflictions he is afflicted, and chastens us in mercy. Surely he will sanctify this dispensation to you, do you great and everlasting good by it, make the world appear like dust and vanity in your sight, as it truly is, and open to your view the glories of a better country, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor pain; but God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes forever. Oh that comfortable word! "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;"† so that our very sorrows are evidences of our calling, and he chastens us because we are his children.

My dear cousin, I commit you to the word of his grace, and to the comforts of his Holy Spirit. Your life is needful for your family: may God, in mercy to them, prolong it, and may he preserve you from the dangerous effects which a stroke like this might have upon a frame so tender as yours. I grieve with you, I pray for you; could I do more I would, but God must comfort you.

Yours, in our dear Lord Jesus,

W. C.

In the following year the tender feelings of Cowper were called forth by family affliction that pressed more immediately on himself; he was hurried to Cambridge by the dangerous illness of his brother, then residing as a fellow at Bene't College. An affection truly fraternal had ever subsisted between the brothers, and the reader will recollect what the poet has said, in one of his letters, concerning their social intercourse while he resided at Huntingdon.

In the first two years of his residence at Olney, he had been repeatedly visited by Mr. John Cowper, and how cordially he returned that kindness and attention the following letter will testify, which was probably written in the chamber of the invalid.

TO MRS. COWPER.

March 5, 1770.

My brother continues much as he was. His case is a very dangerous one—an imposthume of the liver, attended by an asthma and dropsy. The physician has little hope of his recovery, I believe I might say none at all, only, being a friend, he does not formally give him over by ceasing to visit him, lest it should sink his spirits. For my own part, I have no expectation of his recovery, except by a signal interposition of Providence in answer to prayer. His case is clearly beyond the reach of medicine: but I have seen many a sickness healed, where the danger has been equally threatening, by the only Physician of value. I doubt not he will have an interest in your prayers, as he has in the prayers of many. May the Lord incline his ear and give an answer of peace. I know it is good to be afflicted. I trust that you have found it so, and that under the teaching of God's own Spirit we shall both be purified. It is the desire of my soul to seek a better country, where God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people; and where, looking back upon the ways by which he has led us, we shall be filled with everlasting wonder, love, and praise.

I must add no more.

Yours ever, W. C.

The sickness and death of his learned, pious, and affectionate brother, made a very strong impression on the tender heart and mind of Cowper—an impression so strong, that it induced him to write a narrative of the remarkable circumstances which occurred at the time. He sent a copy of this narrative to Mr. Newton. The paper is curious in every point of view, and so likely to awaken sentiments of piety in minds where it may be most desirable to have them awakened, that Mr. Newton subsequently communicated it to the public.*

Here it is necessary to introduce a brief

* Isaiah xliii. 2. † Isaiah xlviii. 10.

* For this interesting document, see p. 483.

account of the interesting person whom the poet regarded so tenderly. John Cowper was born in 1737. Being designed for the church, he was privately educated by a clergyman, and became eminent for the extent and variety of his erudition in the university of Cambridge. The remarkable change in his views and principles is copiously displayed by his brother, in recording the pious close his life. Bene't College, of which he was a fellow, was his usual residence, and it became the scene of his death, on the 20th of March, 1770. Fraternal affection has executed a perfectly just and graceful description of his character, both in prose and verse. We transcribe both as highly honorable to these exemplary brethren, who may indeed be said to have dwelt together in unity.

"He was a man" (says the poet in speaking of his deceased brother) "of a most candid and ingenuous spirit; his temper remarkably sweet, and in his behavior to me he had always manifested an uncommon affection. His outward conduct, so far as it fell under my notice, or I could learn it by the report of others, was perfectly decent and unblamable. There was nothing vicious in any part of his practice, but, being of a studious, thoughtful turn, he placed his chief delight in the acquisition of learning, and made such proficiency in it, that he had but few rivals in that of a classical kind. He was critically skilled in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; was beginning to make himself master of the Syriac, and perfectly understood the French and Italian, the latter of which he could speak fluently. Learned however as he was, he was easy and cheerful in his conversation, and entirely free from the stiffness which is generally contracted by men devoted to such pursuits."

"I had a brother once:
Peace to the memory of a man of worth!
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners sweet, as virtue always wears,
When gay good humor dresses her in smiles!
He grac'd a college, in which order yet
Was sacred, and was honored, lov'd, and wept
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there!"

Another interesting tribute to his memory will be found in the following letter.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, May 8, 1770.

Dear Joe,—Your letter did not reach me till the last post, when I had not time to answer it. I left Cambridge immediately after my brother's death.

I am obliged to you for the particular account you have sent me * * * * He, to whom I have surrendered myself and all my concerns has otherwise appointed, and let his will be done. He gives me much which he withholds from others, and if he was pleased to withhold all that makes an outward difference between me and the poor mendicant in the street, it would still become me to say, his will be done.

It pleased God to cut short my brother's connexions and expectations here, yet not without giving him lively and glorious views of a better happiness than any he could propose to himself in such a world as this. Notwithstanding his great learning, (for he was one of the chief men in the university in that respect,) he was candid and sincere in his inquiries after truth. Though he could not come into my sentiments when I first acquainted him with them, nor, in the many conversations which I afterward had with him upon the subject, could he be brought to acquiesce in them as scriptural and true, yet I had no sooner left St. Alban's than he began to study, with the deepest attention, those points in which we differed, and to furnish himself with the best writers upon them. His mind was kept open to conviction for five years, during all which time he labored in this pursuit with unwearied diligence, as leisure and opportunity were afforded. Amongst his dying words were these: "Brother, I thought you wrong, yet wanted to believe as you did. I found myself not able to believe, yet always thought I should be one day brought to do so." From the study of books he was brought, upon his death-bed, to the study of himself, and there learned to renounce his righteousness and his own most amiable character, and to submit himself to the righteousness which is of God by faith. With these views he was desirous of death. Satisfied of his interest in the blessing purchased by the blood of Christ, he prayed for death with earnestness, felt the approach of it with joy, and died in peace.

Yours, my dear friend,
W. C.

It is this simple yet firm reliance on the merits of the Saviour, and on his atoning blood and righteousness, that can alone impart true peace to the soul. Such was the faith of patriarchs, prophets and apostles: and such will be the faith of all who are taught of God. Works do not go before, but follow after: they are not the cause, but the effect; the fruits of faith, and indispensable to glorify God, to attest the power and reality of divine grace, and to determine the measure of our everlasting reward.

Cowper's feelings on this impressive occasion are still further disclosed in the following letter.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Olney, June 7, 1770

My dear Cousin,—I am obliged to you for

sometimes thinking of an unseen friend, and bestowing a letter upon me. It gives me pleasure to hear from you, especially to find that our gracious Lord enables you to weather out the storms you meet with, and to cast anchor within the veil.

You judge rightly of the manner in which I have been affected by the Lord's late dispensation towards my brother. I found in it cause of sorrow that I had lost so near a relation, and one so deservedly dear to me, and that he left me just when our sentiments upon the most interesting subject became the same, but much more cause of joy, that it pleased God to give me clear and evident proof that he had changed his heart, and adopted him into the number of his children. For this, I hold myself peculiarly bound to thank him, because he might have done all that he was pleased to do for him, and yet have afforded him neither strength nor opportunity to declare it. I doubt not that he enlightens the understandings, and works a gracious change in the hearts of many, in their last moments, whose surrounding friends are not made acquainted with it.

He told me that, from the time he was first ordained, he began to be dissatisfied with his religious opinions, and to suspect that there were greater things concealed in the Bible than were generally believed or allowed to be there. From the time when I first visited him after my release from St. Alban's, he began to read upon the subject. It was at that time I informed him of the views of divine truth which I had received in that school of affliction. He laid what I said to heart, and began to furnish himself with the best writers upon the controverted points, whose works he read with great diligence and attention, comparing them all the while with the Scripture. None ever truly and ingenuously sought the truth, but they found it. A spirit of earnest inquiry is the gift of God, who never says to any, Seek ye my face in vain. Accordingly, about ten days before his death, it pleased the Lord to dispel all his doubts, to reveal in his heart the knowledge of the Saviour, and to give him firm and unshaken peace, in the belief of his ability and willingness to save. As to the affair of the fortune-teller, he never mentioned it to me, nor was there any such paper found as you mention. I looked over all his papers before I left the place, and had there been such a one, must have discovered it. I have heard the report from other quarters, but no other particulars than that the woman foretold him when he should die. I suppose there may be some truth in the matter, but, whatever he might think of it before his knowledge of the truth, and however extraordinary her predictions might really be, I am satisfied that he had then received far other views of the wisdom and majesty of God, than to suppose that he would intrust his secret counsels to a vagrant, who did not mean, I suppose, to be understood to have received her intelligence from the fountain of light, but thought herself sufficiently honored by any who would give her credit for a secret intercourse of this kind with the prince of darkness.

Mrs. Unwin is much obliged to you for your kind inquiry after her. She is well, I thank God, as usual, and sends her respects to you. Her son is in the ministry, and has the living of Stock in Essex. We were last week alarmed with an account of his being dangerously ill; Mrs. Unwin went to see him, and in a few days left him out of danger.

W. C.

The letters of the poet to this amiable relative afford a pleasing insight into the recesses of his pious and sympathizing mind; and, if they have awakened the interest which they are so calculated to excite, the reader will feel concerned to find a chasm of ten years in this valuable correspondence; the more so as it was chiefly occasioned by a cause which it will soon be our painful office to detail in the course of the ensuing passages. In the autumn of the year in which he sustained the loss of his excellent brother, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Hill.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Sept. 25, 1770.

Dear Joe,—I have not done conversing

* It is impossible to read this and the four following letters of Cowper to Mr. Hill, as well as a preceding one in page 49, and not to remark their altered tone and diminished cordiality of feeling. The forgetfulness of former ties and pursuits is often, we know, made a subject of reproach against religious characters. How then is Cowper to be vindicated? Does religion pervert the feelings? We believe, on the contrary, that it purifies and exalts them; but it changes their current, and fixes them on higher and nobler objects. Cowper's mind, it must be remembered, had experienced a great moral revolution, which had imparted a new and powerful impression to his views and principles. In this state of things, Mr. Hill (lamenting possibly the change) solicits his return to London, and to his former habits and associations. But the relish for these enjoyments was gone; they had lost their power to charm and captivate. "I am now more than ever," says Cowper, "unwilling to revisit those noisy and crowded scenes, which I never loved, and which I now abhor; the incidents of my life have given an entire new turn to my whole character and conduct, and rendered me incapable of receiving pleasure from the same employments and amusements of which I could readily partake in former days." (See page 50.) Hill reiterates the invitation, and Cowper his refusal. Thus one party was advancing in spirituality, while the other remained stationary. The bond was therefore necessarily weakened, because identity of feeling must ever constitute the basis of all human friendships and intercourse; and the mind that has received a heavenly impulse cannot return with its former ardor to the pursuit of earthly objects. It cannot ascend and descend at the same moment. Such, however, was the real worth and honesty of Mr. Hill, that their friendship still survived, and a memorial of it is recorded in lines familiar to every reader of Cowper.

"An honest man, close button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within."

with terrestrial objects, though I should be happy were I able to hold more continual converse with a friend above the skies. He has my heart, but he allows a corner in it for all who show me kindness, and therefore one for you. The storm of sixty-three made a wreck of the friendships I had contracted in the course of many years, yours excepted, which has survived the tempest.

I thank you for your repeated invitation. Singular thanks are due to you for so *singular* an instance of regard. I could not leave Olney, unless in a case of absolute necessity, without much inconvenience to myself and others. W. C.

The next year was distinguished by the marriage of his friend Mr. Hill, to a lady of most estimable character, on which occasion Cowper thus addressed him.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, August 27, 1771.

Dear Joe,—I take a friend's share in all your concerns, so far as they come to my knowledge, and consequently did not receive the news of your marriage with indifference. I wish you and your bride all the happiness that belongs to the state; and the still greater felicity of that state which marriage is only a type of. All those connexions shall be dissolved; but there is an indissoluble bond between Christ and his church, the subject of derision to an unthinking world, but the glory and happiness of all his people.

I join with your mother and sisters in their joy upon the present occasion, and beg my affectionate respects to them and to Mrs. Hill unknown.

Yours ever, W. C.

We do not discover any further traces of his correspondence in the succeeding year than the three following letters. The first proves his great sense of honor and delicate feeling in transactions of a pecuniary nature.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, June 27, 1772.

My dear Friend,—I only write to return you thanks for your kind offer—*Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ.* But I will endeavor to go on without troubling you. Excuse an expression that dishonors your friendship; I should rather say, it would be a trouble to myself, and I know you will be generous enough to give me credit for the assertion. I had rather want many things, anything, indeed, that this world could afford me, than abuse the affection of a friend. I suppose you are sometimes troubled upon my account. But you need not. I have no doubt it will be seen, when my days are closed, that I served a master who would not suffer me to want anything that was good for me. He said to Jacob I will surely do thee good; and this he said, not for his sake only, but for ours also, if we trust in him. This thought relieves me from the greatest part of the distress I should else suffer in my present circumstances, and enables me to sit down peacefully upon the wreck of my fortune

Yours ever, my dear friend, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, July 2, 1772.

My dear friend,—My obligations to you sit easy upon me, because I am sure you confer them in the spirit of a friend. 'Tis pleasant to some minds to confer obligations, and it is not unpleasant to others to be properly sensible of them. I hope I have this pleasure—and can, with a true sense of your kindness, subscribe myself,

Yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Nov. 5, 1772.

Believe me, my dear friend, truly sensible of your invitation, though I do not accept it. My peace of mind is of so delicate a constitution, that the air of London will not agree with it. You have my prayers, the only return I can make you for your many acts of still continued friendship.

If you should smile, or even laugh, at my conclusion, and I were near enough to see it, I should not be angry, though I should be grieved. It is not long since I should have laughed at such a recompense myself. But, glory be to the name of Jesus, those days are past, and, I trust, never to return!

I am yours and Mrs. Hill's,

With much sincerity, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

The kind and affectionate intercourse which subsisted on the part of Cowper and his beloved pastor has already been adverted to in the preceding history. It was the commerce of two kindred minds, united by a participation in the same blessed hope, and seeking to improve their union by seizing every opportunity of usefulness. Friendship, to be durable, must be pure, virtuous, and holy. All other associations are liable to the caprice of passion, and to the changing tide of human events. It is not enough that there be a natural coincidence of character and temperament, a similarity of earthly pursuit and object; there must be materials of a higher fabric, streams flowing from a purer source. There must be the impress of divine

grace stamping the same common image and superscription on both hearts. A friendship founded on such a basis, strengthened by time and opportunity, and nourished by the frequent interchange of good offices, is perhaps the nearest approximation to happiness attainable in this chequered life.

Such a friendship is beautifully portrayed by Cowper, in the following passage in his Poem on Conversation; and it is highly probable that he alludes to his own feelings on this occasion, and to the connexion subsisting between himself and Newton.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is compos'd
Of hearts in union mutually disclos'd;
And, farewell else all hope of pure delight!
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright:
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame:
. . . . . .
But souls, that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
And, with a fearless confidence, make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own;
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course;
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And, one in heart, in interest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.

It is to the friendship and intercourse formed between these two excellent men, that we are indebted for the origin of the Olney Hymns. These hymns are too celebrated in the annals of sacred poetry not to demand special notice in a life of Cowper, who contributed to that collection some of the most beautiful and devotional effusions that ever enriched this species of composition. They were the joint production of the divine and the poet, and intended, (as the former expressly says in his preface) "as a monument to perpetuate the remembrance of an intimate and endeared friendship" They were subsequently introduced into the parish church of Olney, with the view of raising the tone and character of church psalmody. The old version of Sternhold and Hopkins, previously used, and still retained in many of our churches, was considered to be too antiquated in its language, and not sufficiently imbued with the characteristic features of the Gospel dispensation, to be adapted to the advancing spirit of religion. It was to supply this defect that the above work was thus introduced, and the acceptance with which it was received fully justified the expectation. Viewed in this light, it is a kind of epoch in the history of the Established Church. Other communities of Christians had long employed the instrumentality of hymns to embody the feelings of devotion; but our own church had not felt this necessity, or adopted the custom; prejudice had even interposed, in some instances, to resist their introduction, till the right was fully established by the decision of law.* The prejudices of past times are, however, at length, rapidly giving way to the wishes and demands of modern piety; and we can now appeal to the versions of a Stewart, a Noel, a Pratt, a Bickersteth, and many others as a most suitable vehicle for this devotional exercise. The Olney Hymns are entitled to the praise of being the precursors of this improved mode of psalmody, jointly with the collection of the Rev. M. Madan, at the Lock, and that of Mr. Berridge, at Everton.

But, independently of this circumstance, they present far higher claims. They portray the varied emotions of the human heart in its conflicts with sin, and aspirations after holiness. We there contemplate the depression of sorrow and the triumph of hope; the terrors inspired by the law and the confidence awakened by the Gospel; and, what may be considered as the genuine transcript of the poet's own mind, especially in the celebrated hymn, ("God moves in a mysterious way," &c.,) we see depicted, in impressive language, the struggles of a faith trying to penetrate into the dark and mysterious dispensations of God, and at length reposing on his unchangeable faithfulness and love. These sentiments and feelings so descriptive of the exercises of the soul, find a response in every awakened heart; and the church of Christ will never cease to claim its property in effusions like these till the Christian warfare is ended, and the perceptions of erring reason and sense are exchanged for the bright visions of eternity.

The undertaking commenced about the year 1771, though the collection was not finally completed and published till 1779. The total number contributed by Cowper was sixty-eight hymns. They are distinguished by the initial letter of his name. It was originally stipulated that each should bear their proportion in this joint labor, till the whole work was accomplished. With this understanding, the pious design was gradually proceeding in its auspicious course, when, by one of those solemn and mysterious dispensations from which neither rank, nor genius, nor moral excellence can claim exemption, it pleased Him whose "way is in the deep," and whose "footsteps are not known," and of whom it is emphatically said, "that clouds and darkness are round about him," though "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne," to suspend the powers of this interesting sufferer, and once more to shroud them in darkness.

* The Rev. T. Cotterill, formerly of Sheffield, and in much esteem for his piety and usefulness, was the first who established this right by a judicial proceeding.

In contemplating this event, in the peculiarity of its time, character, and consequences, well may we exclaim, "Lord, what is man!" and, while the consciousness of the infinite wisdom and mercy of God precludes us from saying, "What doest Thou?" we feel that it must be reserved for eternity to develop the mysterious design of these dispensations.

It was in the year 1773 that this afflicting malady returned. Cowper sank into such severe paroxysms of religious despondency, that he required an attendant of the most gentle, vigilant, and inflexible spirit. Such an attendant he found in that faithful guardian, whom he had professed to love as a mother, and who watched over him during this long fit of a most depressing malady, extended through several years, with that perfect mixture of tenderness and fortitude which constitutes the characteristic feature of female services. I wish to pass rapidly over this calamitous period, and shall only observe that nothing could surpass the sufferings of the patient or exceed the care of the nurse. Her unremitting attentions received the most delightful of rewards in seeing the pure and powerful mind, to whose restoration she had so greatly contributed, not only gradually restored to the common enjoyments of life, but successively endowed with new and marvellous funds of diversified talents, and a vigorous application of them.

The spirit of Cowper emerged by slow degrees from its deep dejection; and, before his mind was sufficiently recovered to employ itself on literary composition, it sought and found much relief and amusement in domesticating a little group of hares. On his expressing a wish to divert himself by rearing a single leveret, the good-nature of his neighbors supplied him with three. The variety of their dispositions became a source of great entertainment to his compassionate and contemplative spirit. One of the trio he has celebrated in the Task, and a very animated and minute account of this singular family, humanized, and described most admirably by himself in prose, appeared first in the Gentleman's Magazine, and was subsequently inserted in the second volume of his poems. These interesting animals had not only the honor of being cherished and celebrated by a poet, but the pencil has also contributed to their renown.

His three tame hares, Mrs. Unwin, and Mr. Newton, were, for a considerable time, the only companions of Cowper; but, as Mr. Newton was removed to a distance from his afflicted friend by preferment in London,* (to which he was presented by that liberal encourager of active piety, Mr. Thornton,) before he left Olney, in 1780, he humanely triumphed over the strong reluctance of Cowper to see a stranger, and kindly introduced him to the regard and good offices of the Rev. Mr. Bull of Newport-Pagnell. This excellent man, so distinguished by his piety and wit, and honored by the friendship of John Thornton, from that time considered it to be his duty to visit the invalid once a fortnight, and acquired, by degrees, his cordial and confidential esteem.

The affectionate temper of Cowper inclined him particularly to exert his talents at the request of his friends, even in seasons when such exertion could hardly have been made without a painful degree of self-command.

At the suggestion of Mr. Newton, we have seen him writing a series of hymns: at the request of Mr. Bull, he translated several spiritual songs, from the poetry of Madame de la Mothe Guyon, the tender and mystical French writer, whose talents and misfortunes drew upon her a long series of persecution from many acrimonious bigots, and secured to her the friendship of the mild and pious Fenelon!

We shall perceive, as we advance, that the more distinguished works of Cowper were also written at the express desire of persons whom he particularly regarded; and it may be remarked, to the honor of friendship, that he considered its influence as the happiest inspiration; or, to use his own expressive words,

> The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
> Should be the poet's heart:
> Affection lights a brighter flame
> Than ever blazed by art.

The poetry of Cowper is itself an admirable illustration of this maxim: and perhaps the maxim may point to the principal source of that uncommon force and felicity with which this most feeling poet commands the affection of his reader.

In delineating the life of an author, it seems the duty of biography to indicate the degree of influence which the warmth of his heart produced on the fertility of his mind. But those mingled flames of friendship and poetry, which were to burst forth with the most powerful effect in the compositions of Cowper, were not yet kindled. His depressing malady had suspended the exercise of his genius for several years, and precluded him from renewing his correspondence with the relation whom he so cordially regarded in Hertfordshire, except by brief letters on pecuniary concerns.

We insert the following as discovering symptoms of approaching convalescence.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Nov. 12, 1776.

Dear Friend,—One to whom fish is so wel-

* He was presented to the living of St. Mary Woolnoth, in the city.—Ed.

* Private correspondence.

come as it is to me, can have no great occasion to distinguish the sorts. In general, therefore, whatever fish are likely to think a jaunt into the country agreeable will be sure to find me ready to receive them.

Having suffered so much by nervous fevers myself, I know how to congratulate Ashley upon his recovery. Other distempers only batter the walls; but *they* creep silently into the citadel and put the garrison to the sword.

You perceive I have not made a squeamish use of your obliging offer. The remembrance of past years, and of the sentiments formerly exchanged in our evening walks, convinces me still that an unreserved acceptance of what is graciously offered is the handsomest way of dealing with one of your character.

Believe me yours, W. C.

As to the frequency, which you leave to my choice too, you have no need to exceed the number of your former remittances.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, April—I fancy the 20th, 1777.

My dear Friend,—Thanks for a turbot, a lobster, and Captain Brydone;† a gentleman, who relates his travels so agreeably, that he deserves always to travel with an agreeable companion. I have been reading Gray's Works, and think him the only poet since Shakspeare entitled to the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him. I was prejudiced. He did not belong to our Thursday society, and was an Eton man, which lowered him prodigiously in our esteem. I once thought Swift's Letters the best that could be written; but I like Gray's better. His humor, or his wit, or whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet, I think, equally poignant with the Dean's.

I am yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, May 25, 1777.

My dear Friend,—We differ not much in our opinion of Gray. When I wrote last, I was in the middle of the book. His later Epistles, I think, are worth little, *as such*, but might be turned to excellent account by a young student of taste and judgment. As to West's Letters, I think I could easily bring your opinion of them to square with mine. They are elegant and sensible, but have nothing in them that is characteristic, or that discriminates them from the letters of any other young man of taste and learning. As to the book you mention, I am in doubt whether to read it or not. I should like the philosophical part of it, but the political, which, I suppose, is a detail of intrigues carried on by the Company and their servants.* a history of rising and falling nabobs, I should have no appetite to at all. I will not, therefore, give you the trouble of sending it at present.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Olney, July 13, 1777.

My dear Friend,—You need not give yourself any further trouble to procure me the South Sea Voyages. Lord Dartmouth, who was here about a month since, and was so kind as to pay me two visits, has furnished me with both Cook's and Forster's. 'Tis well for the poor natives of those distant countries that our national expenses cannot be supplied by cargoes of yams and bananas. Curiosity, therefore, being once satisfied, they may possibly be permitted for the future to enjoy their riches of that kind in peace.

If, when you are most at leisure, you can find out Baker upon the Microscope, or Vincent Bourne's Latin Poems, the last edition, and send them, I shall be obliged to you,—either, or both, if they can be easily found.

I am yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Olney, Jan. 1, 1778.

My dear Friend,—Your last packet was doubly welcome, and Mrs. Hill's kindness gives me peculiar pleasure, not as coming from a stranger to me, for I do not account her so, though I never saw her, but as coming from one so nearly connected with yourself. I shall take care to acknowledge the receipt of her obliging letter, when I return the books. Assure yourself, in the mean time, that I read as if the librarian was at my elbow, continually jogging it, and growling out, Make haste. But, as I read aloud, I shall not have finished before the end of the week, and will return them by the diligence next Monday.

* Private correspondence.

† "Brydone," author of Travels in Sicily and Malta. They are written with much interest, but he indulges in remarks on the subject of Mount Etna which rather militate against the Mosaic account of the creation.

* Cowper here alludes to the celebrated work of the Abbé Raynal, entitled "Philosophical and Political History of the Establishments and Commerce of Europeans in the two Indies." This book created a very powerful sensation, being written with great freedom of sentiment and boldness of remark, conveyed in an eloquent though rather declamatory style. Such was the alarm excited in France by this publication, that a decree passed the Parliament of Paris, by which the work was ordered to be burnt.

† Private correspondence.

I shall be glad if you will let me know whether I am to understand by the sorrow you express that any part of my former supplies is actually cut off, or whether they are only more tardy in coming in than usual. It is useful, even to the rich, to know, as nearly as may be, the exact amount of their income; but how much more so to a man of my small dimensions! If the former should be the case, I shall have less reason to be surprised than I have to wonder at the continuance of them so long. Favors are favors indeed, when laid out upon so barren a soil, where the expense of sowing is never accompanied by the smallest hope of return. What pain there is in gratitude, I have often felt; but the pleasure of requiting an obligation has always been out of my reach.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, April 11, 1778.

My dear Friend,—Poor Sir Thomas![†] I knew that I had a place in his affections, and, from his own information many years ago, a place in his will; but little thought that after a lapse of so many years I should still retain it. His remembrance of me after so long a season of separation, has done me much honor, and leaves me the more reason to regret his decease.

I am reading the Abbé with great satisfaction,[‡] and think him the most intelligent writer upon so extensive a subject I ever met with; in every respect superior to the Abbé in Scotland.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, May 7, 1778.

My dear Friend,—I have been in continual fear lest every post should bring a summons for the Abbé Raynal, and am glad that I have finished him before my fears were realized. I have kept him long, but not through neglect or idleness. I read the five volumes to Mrs. Unwin; and my voice will seldom serve me with more than an hour's reading at a time. I am indebted to him for much information upon subjects which, however interesting, are so remote from those with which country folks in general are conversant, that, had not his works reached me at Olney, I should have been forever ignorant of them.

I admire him as a philosopher, as a writer, as a man of extraordinary intelligence, and no less extraordinary abilities to digest it. He is a true patriot. But then the world is his country. The frauds and tricks of the cabinet and the counter seem to be equally objects of his aversion. And, if he had not found that religion too had undergone a mixture of artifice, in its turn, perhaps he would have been a Christian.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

† Sir Thomas Hesketh, Baronet, of Rufford Hall, in Lancashire.

‡ Raynal.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, June 18, 1778.

My dear Friend,—I truly rejoice that the Chancellor has made you such a present, that he has given such an additional lustre to it by his manner of conferring it, and that all this happened before you went to Wargrave, because it made your retirement there the more agreeable. This is just according to the character of the man. He will give grudgingly in answer to solicitaton, but delights in surprising those he esteems with his bounty. May you live to receive still further proofs that I am not mistaken in my opinion of him!

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 18, 1778.

Dear Unwin,—I feel myself much obliged to you for your intimation, and have given the subject of it all my best attention, both before I received your letter and since. The result is, that I am persuaded it will be better not to write. I know the man and his disposition well; he is very liberal in his way of thinking, generous, and discerning. He is well aware of the tricks that are played upon such occasions, and, after fifteen years' interruption of all intercourse between us, would translate my letter into this language —pray remember the poor.[†] This would disgust him, because he would think our former intimacy disgraced by such an oblique application. He has not forgotten me, and, if he had, there are those about him who cannot come into his presence without reminding him of me, and he is also perfectly acquainted with my circumstances. It would perhaps give him pleasure to surprise me with a benefit, and if he means me such a favor, I should disappoint him by asking it.

I repeat my thanks for your suggestion; you see a part of my reasons for thus conducting myself; if we were together I could give you more.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

† Mr. Unwin had suggested to Cowper the propriety of an application to Lord Thurlow for some mark of favor; which the latter never conferred, and which Cowper was resolved never to solicit.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 26, 1779.

I am obliged to you for the Poets, and, though I little thought that I was translating so much money out of your pocket into the bookseller's, when I turned Prior's poem into Latin, yet I must needs say that, if you think it worth while to purchase the English Classics at all, you cannot possess yourself of them upon better terms. I have looked into some of the volumes, but, not having yet finished the Register, have merely looked into them. A few things I have met with, which, if they had been burned the moment they were written, it would have been better for the author, and at least as well for his readers. There is not much of this, but a little is too much. I think it a pity the editor admitted any; the English muse would have lost no credit by the omission of such trash. Some of them, again, seem to me to have but a very disputable right to a place among the Classics, and I am quite at a loss, when I see them in such company, to conjecture what is Dr. Johnson's idea or definition of classical merit. But, if he inserts the Poems of some who can hardly be said to deserve such an honor, the purchaser may comfort himself with the hope that he will exclude none that do. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, July, —79.

My dear Friend,—When I was at Margate, it was an excursion of pleasure to go to see Ramsgate. The pier, I remember, was accounted a most excellent piece of stonework, and such I found it. By this time, I suppose, it is finished, and surely it is no small advantage that you have an opportunity of observing how nicely those great stones are put together, as often as you please, without either trouble or expense.

. . . . . .

There was not at that time, much to be seen in the Isle of Thanet, besides the beauty of the country and the fine prospects of the sea, which are nowhere surpassed, except in the Isle of Wight, or upon some parts of the coast of Hampshire. One sight, however, I remember, engaged my curiosity, and I went to see it—a fine piece of ruins, built by the late Lord Holland at a great expense, which, the day after I saw it, tumbled down for nothing. Perhaps, therefore, it is still a ruin; and, if it is, I would advise you by all means to visit it, as it must have been much improved by this fortunate incident. It is hardly possible to put stones together with that air of wild and magnificent disorder which they are sure to acquire by falling of their own accord.

I remember (the last thing I mean to remember upon this occasion) that Sam Cox, the counsel, walking by the sea-side, as if absorbed in deep contemplation, was questioned about what he was musing on. He replied, "I was wondering that such an almost infinite and unwieldly element should produce *a sprat*."

Our love attends your whole party.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, July 17, 1779.

My dear Friend,—we envy you your seabreezes. In the garden we feel nothing but the reflection of the heat from the walls, and in the parlor, from the opposite houses. I fancy Virgil was so situated when he wrote those two beautiful lines:

. . . . Oh quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ!

The worst of it is that, though the sunbeams strike as forcibly upon my harp-strings as they did upon his, they elicit no such sounds, but rather produce such groans as they are said to have drawn from those of the statue of Memnon.

As you have ventured to make the experiment, your own experience will be your best guide in the article of bathing. An inference will hardly follow, though one should pull at it with all one's might, from Smollett's case to yours. He was corpulent, muscular, and strong; whereas, if you were either stolen or strayed, such a description of you in an advertisement would hardly direct an inquirer with sufficient accuracy and exactness. But, if bathing does not make your head ache, or prevent you sleeping at night, I should imagine it could not hurt you.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 21, 1779.

Amico mio, be pleased to buy me a glazier's diamond pencil. I have glazed the two frames, designed to receive my pine plants. But I cannot mend the kitchen windows, till, by the help of that implement, I can reduce the glass to its proper dimensions. If I were a plumber, I should be a complete glazier, and possibly the happy time may come, when I shall be seen trudging away to the neighboring towns with a shelf of glass hanging at my back. If government should impose another tax upon

* Private correspondence.

that commodity, I hardly know a business in which a gentleman might more successfully employ himself. A Chinese, of ten times my fortune, would avail himself of such an opportunity without scruple; and why should not I, who want money as much as any mandarin in China? Rousseau would have been charmed to have seen me so occupied, and would have exclaimed with rapture "that he had found the Emilius who, he supposed, had subsisted only in his own idea." I would recommend it to you to follow my example. You will presently qualify yourself for the task, and may not only amuse yourself at home, but may even exercise your skill in mending the church windows; which, as it would save money to the parish, would conduce, together with your other ministerial accomplishments, to make you extremely popular in the place.

I have eight pair of tame pigeons. When I first enter the garden in the morning, I find them perched upon the wall, waiting for their breakfast, for I feed them always upon the gravel walk. If your wish should be accomplished, and you should find yourself furnished with the wings of a dove, I shall undoubtedly find you amongst them. Only be so good, if that should be the case, to announce yourself by some means or other. For I imagine your crop will require something better than tares to fill it.

Your mother and I, last week, made a trip in a post-chaise to Gayhurst, the seat of Mr. Wright, about four miles off. He understood that I did not much affect strange faces, and sent over his servant, on purpose to inform me that he was going into Leicestershire, and that if I chose to see the gardens I might gratify myself without danger of seeing the proprietor. I accepted the invitation, and was delighted with all I found there. The situation is happy, the gardens elegantly disposed, the hot-house in the most flourishing state, and the orange-trees the most captivating creatures of the kind I ever saw. A man, in short, had need have the talents of Cox or Langford, the auctioneers, to do the whole scene justice.

Our love attends you all.

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Oct. 2, 1779.

My dear Friend,—You begin to count the remaining days of the vacation, not with impatience, but through unwillingness to see the end of it. For the mind of man, at least of most men, is equally busy in anticipating the evil and the good. That word *anticipation* puts me in remembrance of the pamphlet of that name, which, if you purchased, I should be glad to borrow. I have seen only an extract from it in the Review, which made me laugh heartily and wish to peruse the whole.

The newspaper informs me of the arrival of the Jamaica fleet. I hope it imports some pine-apple plants for me. I have a good frame, and a good bed prepared to receive them. I send you annexed a fable, in which the pine-apple makes a figure, and shall be glad if you like the taste of it. Two pair of soles, with shrimps, which arrived last night, demand my acknowledgments. You have heard that when Arion performed upon the harp the fish followed him. I really have no design to fiddle you out of more fish; but, if you should esteem my verses worthy of such a price, though I shall never be so renowned as he was, I shall think myself equally indebted to the Muse that helps me.

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

"The pine-apples," &c.*

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill. She has put Mr. Wright to the expense of building a new hot-house: the plants produced by the seeds she gave me having grown so large as to require an apartment by themselves.

Yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 31, 1779.

My dear Friend,—I wrote my last letter merely to inform you that I had nothing to say, in answer to which you have said nothing. I admire the propriety of your conduct, though I am a loser by it. I will endeavor to say something now, and shall hope for something in return.

I have been well entertained with Johnson's biography, for which I thank you: with one exception, and that a swingeing one, I think he has not acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree. He has belabored that great poet's character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of everything royal in his public, are the two colors with which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him: and it is well for Milton that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged; it is evident enough that, if his biographer could have discovered more, he would not have spared him. As a

* Vide Cowper's Poems.

poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion, from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule (what is indeed ridiculous enough) the childish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced, by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped, by prejudice, against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of the Paradise Lost? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute, variety without end, and never equalled, unless, perhaps, by Virgil. Yet the Doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation.

I could talk a good while longer, but I have no room. Our loves attends you.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Nov. 14, 1779.

My dear Friend,—Your approbation of my last Heliconian present encourages me to send you another. I wrote it, indeed, on purpose for you; for my subjects are not always such as I could hope would prove agreeable to you. My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sunbeams from their surface.

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, &C.†

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Dec. 2, 1779.

My dear Friend,—How quick is the succession of human events! The cares of to-day are seldom the cares of to-morrow; and when we lie down at night, we may safely say to most of our troubles—"Ye have done your worst, and we shall meet no more."

This observation was suggested to me by reading your last letter, which, though I have written since I received it, I have never answered. When that epistle passed under your pen, you were miserable about your tithes, and your imagination was hung round with pictures, that terrified you to such a degree as made even the receipt of money burthensome. But it is all over now. You sent away your farmers in good humor, (for you can make people merry whenever you please,) and now you have nothing to do but to chink your purse and laugh at what is past. Your delicacy makes you groan under that which other men never feel, or feel but lightly. A fly that settles upon the tip of the nose is troublesome; and this is a comparison adequate to the most that mankind in general are sensible of upon such tiny occasions. But the flies that pester you always get between your eye-lids, where the annoyance is almost insupportable.

I would follow your advice, and endeavor to furnish Lord North with a scheme of supplies for the ensuing year, if the difficulty I find in answering the call of my own emergencies did not make me despair of satisfying those of the nation. I can say but this: if I had ten acres of land in the world, whereas I have not one, and in those ten acres should discover a gold mine, richer than all Mexico and Peru, when I had reserved a few ounces for my own annual supply I would willingly give the rest to government. My ambition would be more gratified by annihilating the national incumbrances than by going daily down to the bottom of a mine, to wallow in my own emolument. This is patriotism—you will allow; but, alas! this virtue is for the most part in the hands of those who can do no good with it! He that has but a single handful of it catches so greedily at the first opportunity of growing rich, that his patriotism drops to the ground, and he grasps the gold instead of it. He that never meets with such an opportunity holds it fast in his clenched fists, and says—"Oh, how much good I would do if I could!"

Your mother says—"Pray send my dear love." There is hardly room to add mine, but you will suppose it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Feb. 27, 1780.

My dear Friend,—As you are pleased to desire my letters, I am the more pleased with writing them; though at the same time, I must needs testify my surprise that you should think them worth receiving, as I seldom send one that I think favorably of myself. This is not to be understood as an imputation upon your taste or judgment, but

* Private correspondence. † Vide Cowper's Poems.

as an encomium upon my own modesty and humility, which I desire you to remark well. It is a just observation of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that, though men of ordinary talents may be highly satisfied with their own productions, men of true genius never are. Whatever be their subject, they always seem to themselves to fall short of it, even when they seem to others most to excel; and for this reason—because they have a certain sublime sense of perfection, which other men are strangers to, and which they themselves in their performances are not able to exemplify. Your servant, Sir Joshua! I little thought of seeing you when I began, but as you have popped in you are welcome.

When I wrote last, I was a little inclined to send you a copy of verses, entitled the Modern Patriot, but was not quite pleased with a line or two, which I found it difficult to mend, therefore did not. At night I read Mr. Burke's speech in the newspaper, and was so well pleased with his proposals for a reformation, and the temper in which he made them, that I began to think better of his cause, and burnt my verses. Such is the lot of the man who writes upon the subject of the day; the aspect of affairs changes in an hour or two, and his opinion with it; what was just and well-deserved satire in the morning, in the evening becomes a libel; the author commences his own judge, and, while he condemns with unrelenting severity what he so lately approved, is sorry to find that he has laid his leaf gold upon touchwood, which crumbled away under his fingers. Alas! what can I do with my wit? I have not enough to do great things with, and these little things are so fugitive, that, while a man catches at the subject, he is only filling his hand with smoke. I must do with it as I do with my linnet: I keep him for the most part in a cage, but now and then set open the door, that he may whisk about the room a little, and then shut him up again. My whisking wit has produced the following, the subject of which is more important than the manner in which I have treated it seems to imply, but a fable may speak truth, and all truth is sterling; I only premise that, in the philosophical tract in the Register, I found it asserted that the glow-worm is the nightingale's food.*

An officer of a regiment, part of which is quartered here, gave one of the soldiers leave to be drunk six weeks in hopes of curing him by satiety; he *was* drunk six weeks, and is so still, as often as he can find an opportunity. One vice may swallow up another, but no coroner, in the state of Ethics, ever brought in his verdict, when a vice died, that it was—*felo de se.*

* This letter contained the beautiful fable of the Nightingale and the Glow-worm.

Thanks for all you have done, and all you intend; the biography will be particularly welcome.

Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.*

Olney, March 4, 1780.

Dear Madam,—To communicate surprise is almost, perhaps quite, as agreeable as to receive it. This is my present motive for writing to you rather than to Mr. Newton. He would be pleased with hearing from me, but he would not be surprised at it; you see, therefore, I am selfish upon the present occasion, and principally consult my own gratification. Indeed, if I consulted yours, I should be silent, for I have no such budget as the minister's, furnished and stuffed with ways and means for every emergency, and shall find it difficult, perhaps, to raise supplies even for a short epistle.

You have observed, in common conversation, that the man who coughs the oftenest (I mean if he has not a cold), does it because he has nothing to say. Even so it is in letter-writing: a long preface, such as mine, is an ugly symptom, and always forebodes great sterility in the following pages.

The vicarage-house became a melancholy object as soon as Mr. Newton had left it; when you left it, it became more melancholy: now it is actually occupied by another family, even I cannot look at it without being shocked. As I walked in the garden this evening, I saw the smoke issue from the study chimney, and said to myself, That used to be a sign that Mr. Newton was there; but it is so no longer. The walls of the house know nothing of the change that has taken place; the bolt of the chamber-door sounds just as it used to do; and when Mr. P—— goes up stairs, for aught I know, or ever shall know, the fall of his foot could hardly, perhaps, be distinguished from that of Mr. Newton. But Mr. Newton's foot will never be heard upon that staircase again. These reflections, and such as these, occurred to me upon the occasion. . . . If I were in a condition to leave Olney too, I certainly would not stay in it. It is no attachment to the place that binds me here, but an unfitness for every other. I lived in it once, but now I am buried in it, and have no business with the world on the outside of my sepulchre; my appearance would startle them, and theirs would be shocking to me.

Such are my thoughts about the matter. Others are more deeply affected, and by more weighty considerations, having been many years the objects of a ministry which they had reason to account themselves happy in the possession of. . . .

* Private correspondence.

We were concerned at your account of Robert, and have little doubt but he will shuffle himself out of his place. Where he will find another is a question not to be resolved by those who recommended him to this. I wrote him a long letter a day or two after the receipt of yours, but I am afraid it was only clapping a blister upon the crown of a wig-block.

My respects attend Mr. Newton and yourself, accompanied with much affection for you both.

Yours, dear Madam, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, March 16, 1780.

My dear Friend,—If I had had the horns of a snail, I should have drawn them in the moment I saw the reason of your epistolary brevity, because I felt it too. May your seven reams be multiplied into fourteen, till your letters become truly Lacedæmonian, and are reduced to a single syllable. Though I shall be a sufferer by the effect, I shall rejoice in the cause. You are naturally formed for business, and such a head as yours can never have too much of it. Though my predictions have been fulfilled in two instances, I do not plume myself much upon my sagacity; because it required but little to foresee that Thurlow would be Chancellor, and that you would have a crowded office. As to the rest of my connexions, there too I have given proof of equal foresight, with not a jot more reason for vanity.

. . . . . .

To use the phrase of all who ever wrote upon the state of Europe, the political horizon is dark indeed. The cloud has been thickening, and the thunder advancing many years. The storm now seems to be vertical, and threatens to burst upon the land, as if with the next clap it would shake all to pieces.—As for me, I am no Quaker, except where military matters are in question, and there I am much of the same mind with an honest man, who, when he was forced into the service, declared he would not fight, and gave this reason—because he saw nothing worth fighting for. You will say, perhaps, is not liberty worth a struggle? True: but will success ensure it to me? Might I not, like the Americans, emancipate myself from one master only to serve a score, and with laurels upon my brow sigh for my former chains again?

Many thanks for your kind invitation. Ditto to Mrs. Hill, for the seeds—unexpected, and therefore the more welcome.

* Private correspondence.

You gave me great pleasure by what you said of my uncle.* His motto shall be

Hic ver perpetuum atque alienis mensibus æstas.

I remember the time when I have been kept waking by the fear that he would die before me; but now I think I shall grow old first.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 18, 1780.

I am obliged to you for the communication of your correspondence with ——. It was impossible for any man, of any temper whatever, and however wedded to his own purpose, to resent so gentle and friendly an exhortation as you sent him. Men of lively imaginations are not often remarkable for solidity of judgment. They have generally strong passions to bias it, and are led far away from their proper road, in pursuit of petty phantoms of their own creating. No law ever did or can effect what he has ascribed to that of Moses: it is reserved for mercy to subdue the corrupt inclinations of mankind, which threatenings and penalties, through the depravity of the heart, have always had a tendency rather to inflame.

The love of power seems as natural to kings as the desire of liberty is to their subjects; the excess of either is vicious and tends to the ruin of both. There are many, I believe, who wish the present corrupt state of things dissolved, in hope that the pure primitive constitution will spring up from the ruins. But it is not for man, by himself man, to bring order out of confusion: the progress from one to the other is not natural, much less necessary, and, without the intervention of divine aid, impossible; and they who are for making the hazardous experiment would certainly find themselves disappointed.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, March 28, 1780.

My dear Friend,—I have heard nothing more from Mr. Newton, upon the subject you mention; but I dare say, that, having been given to expect the benefit of your nomination in behalf of his nephew, he still depends upon it. His obligations to Mr. —— have been so numerous and so weighty, that, though he has in a few instances prevailed upon himself to recommend an object now and then to his patronage, he has very spar-

* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

ingly, if at all, exercised his interest with him in behalf of his own relations.

With respect to the advice you are required to give a young lady, that she may be properly instructed in the manner of keeping the sabbath, I just subjoin a few hints that have occured to me upon the occasion, not because I think you want them, but because it would seem unkind to withhold them. The sabbath then, I think, may be considered, first, as a commandment no less binding upon modern Christians, than upon ancient Jews, because the spiritual people amongst them did not think it enough to abstain from manual occupations upon that day, but, entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls, which ever was, and ever will be, a duty incumbent upon all who ever heard of a sabbath, and is of perpetual obligation both upon Jews and Christians; (the commandment, therefore, enjoins it; the prophets have also enforced it; and in many instances, both scriptural and modern, the breach of it has been punished with a providential and judicial severity, that may make by-standers tremble:) secondly, as a privilege, which you well know how to dilate upon, better than I can tell you; thirdly, as a sign of that covenant, by which believers are entitled to a rest that yet remaineth; fourthly, as a *sine qua non* of the Christian character; and, upon this head, I should guard against being misunderstood to mean no more than two attendances upon public worship, which is a form complied with by thousands who never kept a sabbath in their lives. Consistence is necessary to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the day at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all. After all could I ask my catechumea one short question—"Do you love the day, or do you not? If you love it, you will never inquire how far you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If you do not love it, and you find yourself obliged in conscience to acknowledge it, that is an alarming symptom, and ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then it is a weariness to you, and you wish it was over. The ideas of labor and rest are not more opposite to each other than the idea of a sabbath and that dislike and disgust with which it fills the souls of thousands to be obliged to keep it. It is worse than bodily labor."

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, April 6, 1780.

My dear Friend,—I never was, any more than yourself, a friend to pluralities; they are generally found in the hands of the avaricious, whose insatiable hunger after preferment proves them unworthy of any at all. They attend much to the regular payment of their dues, but not at all to the spiritual interests of their parishioners. Having forgot their duty, or never known it, they differ in nothing from the laity, except their outward garb and their exclusive right to the desk and pulpit. But when pluralities seek the man instead of being sought by him, and when the man is honest, conscientious, and pious, careful to employ a substitute, in those respects, like himself; and, not contented with this, will see with his own eyes that the concerns of his parishes are decently and diligently administered: in that case, considering the present dearth of such characters in the ministry, I think it an event advantageous to the people, and much to be desired by all who regret the great and apparent want of sobriety and earnestness among the clergy.* A man who does not seek a living merely as a pecuniary emolument has no need, in my judgment, to refuse one because it is so. He means to do his duty, and by doing it he earns his wages. The two rectories being contiguous to each other, and following easily under the care of one pastor, and both so near to Stock that you can visit them without difficulty as often as you please, I see no reasonable objection, nor does your mother. As to the wry-mouthed sneers and illiberal misconstructions of the censorious, I know no better shield to guard you against them than what you are already furnished with—a clear and unoffended conscience.

I am obliged to you for what you said upon the subject of book-buying, and am very fond of availing myself of another man's pocket, when I can do it creditably to myself and without injury to him. Amusements are necessary in a retirement like mine, especially in such a sable state of mind as I labor under. The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses—it made me a carpenter, a bird-cage maker, a gardener—and has lately taught me to draw, and to draw too with such surprising proficiency in the art, considering my total ignorance of it two months ago, that, when I show your mother my productions, she is all admiration and applause.

You need never fear the communication of what you entrust to us in confidence. You know your mother's delicacy on this point sufficiently, and as for me, I once wrote a Connoisseur† upon the subject of secret-keeping, and from that day to this I believe I have never divulged one.

* A happy change has occurred since this period, and the revival of piety in the Church of England must be perceptible to every observer.—Ed.

† His meaning is, he contributed to the "Connoisseur" an essay or letter on this subject.

We were much pleased with Mr. Newton's application to you for a charity sermon, and what he said upon that subject in his last letter, "that he was glad of an opportunity to give you that proof of his regard."

Believe me yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 16, 1780.

Since I wrote last, we have had a visit from ——. I did not feel myself vehemently disposed to receive him with that complaisance from which a stranger generally infers that he is welcome. By his manner, which was rather bold than easy, I judged that there was no occasion for it, and that it was a trifle which, if he did not meet with, neither would he feel the want of. He has the air of a travelled man, but not of a travelled gentleman; is quite delivered from that reserve which is so common an ingredient in the English character, yet does not open himself gently and gradually, as men of polite behavior do, but bursts upon you all at once. He talks very loud, and when our poor little robins hear a great noise, they are immediately seized with an ambition to surpass it—the increase of their vociferation occasioned an increase of his, and his in return acted as a stimulus upon theirs—neither side entertained a thought of giving up the contest, which became continually more interesting to our ears during the whole visit. The birds however survived it, and so did we. They perhaps flatter themselves they gained a complete victory, but I believe Mr. —— could have killed them both in another hour.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, May 3, 1780.

Dear Sir,—You indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe I am the only man alive, from whom they would be welcome to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more alluring to the eye, at least, if not more pleasing to the taste; but my leaf-gold is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapors that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think it no small proof of your partiality to me that you will read my letters. I am not fond of long-winded metaphors; I have always observed that they halt at the latter end of their progress, and so does mine. I deal much in ink, indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions but such as may prevail, without the least injury, to the person imposed on. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks, and dabchicks. I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them, and her praise and my praise put together are fame enough for me. Oh! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour as I have done for many years, there might, perhaps, be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one would be found from the arctic to the antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so; for, viewed without a reference to their author, what is the earth, what are the planets, what is the sun itself, but a bauble? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say, "The Maker of all these wonders is my friend!" Their eyes have never been opened to see that they are trifles; mine have been, and will be till they are closed forever. They think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hothouse, rich as a West Indian garden, things of consequence, visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing; amuse myself with a green-house, which Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back, and walk away with; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—"This is not mine, 'tis a plaything lent me for the present, I must leave it soon." W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, May 6, 1780.

My dear Friend,—I am much obliged to you for your speedy answer to my queries. I know less of the law than a country attorney, yet sometimes I think I have almost as much business. My former connexion with the profession has got wind, and though I earnestly profess, and protest, and proclaim it abroad, that I know nothing of the matter, they cannot be persuaded to believe, that a head once endowed with a legal periwig can ever be deficient in those natural endowments it is supposed to cover. I have had the good fortune to be once or twice in the right, which, added to the cheapness of a gratui-

tous counsel, has advanced my credit to a degree I never expected to attain in the capacity of a lawyer. Indeed, if two of the wisest in the science of jurisprudence may give opposite opinions on the same point, which does not unfrequently happen, it seems to be a matter of indifference, whether a man answers by rule or at a venture. He that stumbles upon the right side of the question, is just as useful to his client as he that arrives at the same end by regular approaches, and is conducted to the mark he aims at by the greatest authorities.

. . . . .

These violent attacks of a distemper so often fatal are very alarming to all who esteem and respect the Chancellor as he deserves. A life of confinement and of anxious attention to important objects, where the habit is bilious to such a terrible degree, threatens to be but a short one; and I wish he may not be made a text for men of reflection to moralize upon; affording a conspicuous instance of the transient and fading nature of all human accomplishments and attainments.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 8, 1780.

My dear Friend,—My scribbling humor has of late been entirely absorbed in the passion for landscape-drawing. It is a most amusing art, and, like every other art, requires much practice and attention.

Nil sine multo
Vita labore dedit mortalibus.

Excellence is providentially placed beyond the reach of indolence, that success may be the reward of industry, and that idleness may be punished with obscurity and disgrace. So long as I am pleased with an employment I am capable of unwearied application, because my feelings are all of the intense kind: I never received a *little* pleasure from anything in my life: if I am delighted, it is in the extreme. The unhappy consequence of this temperament is, that my attachment to any occupation seldom outlives the novelty of it. That nerve of my imagination, that feels the touch of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue. Hence I draw an unfavorable prognostic, and expect that I shall shortly be constrained to look out for something else. Then perhaps I may string the harp again, and be able to comply with your demand.

Now for the visit you propose to pay us, and propose *not* to pay us, the hope of which plays upon your paper, like a jack-o-lantern upon the ceiling. This is no mean simile, for Virgil (you remember) uses it. 'Tis here, 'tis there, it vanishes, it returns, it dazzles you, a cloud interposes, and it is gone. However just the comparison, I hope you will contrive to spoil it, and that your final determination will be to come. As to the masons you expect, bring them with you—bring brick, bring mortar, bring everything, that would oppose itself to your journey—all shall be welcome. I have a green-house that is too small, come and enlarge it; build me a pinery; repair the garden-wall, that has great need of your assistance; do anything, you cannot do too much; so far from thinking you and your train troublesome, we shall rejoice to see you, upon these or upon any other terms you can propose. But, to be serious—you will do well to consider that a long summer is before you—that the party will not have such another opportunity to meet this great while—that you may finish your masonry long enough before winter, though you should not begin this month, but that you cannot always find your brother and sister Powley at Olney. These and some other considerations, such as the desire we have to see you, and the pleasure we expect from seeing you all together, may, and I think ought, to overcome your scruples.

From a general recollection of Lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, I thought, (and I remember I told you so,) that there was a striking resemblance between that period and the present. But I am now reading, and have read three volumes of, Hume's History, one of which is engrossed entirely by that subject. There I see reason to alter my opinion, and the seeming resemblance has disappeared upon a more particular information. Charles succeeded to a long train of arbitrary princes, whose subjects had tamely acquiesced in the despotism of their masters till their privileges were all forgot. He did but tread in their steps, and exemplify the principles in which he had been brought up, when he oppressed his people. But, just at that time, unhappily for the monarch, the subject began to see, and to see that he had a right to property and freedom. This marks a sufficient difference between the disputes of that day and the present. But there was another main cause of that rebellion, which at this time does not operate at all. The king was devoted to the hierarchy: his subjects were puritans and would not bear it. Every circumstance of ecclesiastical order and discipline was an abomination to them, and, in his esteem, an indispensable duty; and, though at last he was obliged to give up many things, he would not abolish episcopacy, and till that were done his concessions could have no conciliating effect. These two concurring causes

were, indeed, sufficient to set three kingdoms in a flame. But they subsist not now, nor any other, I hope, notwithstanding the bustle made by the patriots, equal to the production of such terrible events.*

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

The correspondence of the poet with his cousin Mrs. Cowper was at this time resumed, after an interval of ten years. She was deeply afflicted by the loss of her brother, Frederick Madan, an officer who died in America, after having distinguished himself by poetical talents as well as by military virtues.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Olney, May 10, 1780.

My dear Cousin,—I do not write to comfort you; that office is not likely to be well performed by one who has no comfort for himself; nor to comply with an impertinent ceremony, which in general might well be spared upon such occasions; but because I would not seem indifferent to the concerns of those I have so much reason to esteem and love. If I did not sorrow for your brother's death, I should expect that nobody would for mine; when I knew him, he was much beloved, and I doubt not continued to be so. To live and die together is the lot of a few happy families, who hardly know what a separation means, and one sepulchre serves them all; but the ashes of our kindred are dispersed indeed. Whether the American Gulf has swallowed up any other of my relations, I know not; it has made many mourners.

Believe me, my dear cousin, though after a long silence, which, perhaps, nothing less than the present concern could have prevailed with me to interrupt, as much as ever,

Your affectionate kinsman,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, May 10, 1780.

My dear Friend,—If authors could have lived to adjust and authenticate their own text, a commentator would have been a useless creature. For instance—if Dr. Bentley had found, or opined that he had found, the word *tube*, where it seemed to present itself to you, and had judged the subject worthy of his critical acumen, he would either have justified the corrupt reading, or have substituted some invention of his own, in defence of which he would have exerted all his polemical abilities, and have quarrelled with half the literati in Europe. Then suppose the writer himself, as in the present case, to interpose, with a gentle whisper, thus—"If you look again, doctor, you will perceive, that what appears to you to be *tube* is neither more nor less than the monosyllable *ink*, but I wrote it in great haste, and the want of sufficient precision in the character has occasioned your mistake; *you* will be satisfied, especially when you see the sense elucidated by the explanation."—But I question whether the doctor would quit his ground, or allow any author to be a competent judge in his own case. The world, however, would acquiesce immediately, and vote the critic useless.

James Andrews, who is my Michael Angelo, pays me many compliments on my success in the art of drawing, but I have not yet the vanity to think myself qualified to furnish your apartment. If I should ever attain to the degree of self-opinion requisite to such an undertaking, I shall labor at it with pleasure. I can only say, though I hope not with the affected modesty of the above-mentioned Dr. Bentley, who said the same thing,

Me quoque dicunt
Vatem pastores; sed non ego credulus illis.

A crow, rook, or raven, has built a nest in one of the young elm-trees at the side of Mrs. Aspray's orchard. In the violent storm that blew yesterday morning, I saw it agitated to a degree that seemed to threaten its immediate destruction, and versified the following thoughts upon the occasion.*

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.†

Olney, June 2, 1780.

Dear Madam,—When I write to Mr. Newton, he answers me by letter; when I write to you, you answer me in fish. I return you many thanks for the mackerel and lobster. They assured me, in terms as intelligible as pen and ink could have spoken, that you still remember *Orchard-side;* and, though they never spoke in their lives, and it was still less to be expected from them that they should speak being dead, they gave us an assurance of your affection that corresponds exactly with that which Mr. Newton expresses towards us in all his letters.—For my own part, I never in my life began a letter more at a venture than the present. It is possible that I may finish it, but perhaps more than probable that I shall not. I have had several indifferent nights, and the wind is easterly;

* To those who contemplate the course of modern events, and the signs of the times, there may be a doubt whether the sentiment here expressed is equally applicable in the present age. May the union of good and wise men be the means, under the Providence of God, of averting every threatening danger.

* Cowper's fable of the Raven concluded this letter.

† Private correspondence.

two circumstances so unfavorable to me in all my occupations, but especially that of writing, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could even bring myself to attempt it.

You have never yet perhaps been made acquainted with the unfortunate Tom F—'s misadventure. He and his wife, returning from Hanslope fair, were coming down Weston-lane; to wit, themselves, their horse, and their great wooden panniers, at ten o'clock at night. The horse having a lively imagination and very weak nerves, fancied he either saw or heard something, but has never been able to say what. A sudden fright will impart activity and a momentary vigor even to lameness itself. Accordingly he started and sprang from the middle of the road to the side of it, with such surprising alacrity, that he dismounted the gingerbread baker and his gingerbread wife in a moment. Not contented with this effort, nor thinking himself yet out of danger, he proceeded as fast as he could to a full gallop, rushed against the gate at the bottom of the lane, and opened it for himself, without perceiving that there was any gate there. Still he galloped, and with a velocity and momentum continually increasing, till he arrived in Olney. I had been in bed about ten minutes, when I heard the most uncommon and unaccountable noise that can be imagined. It was, in fact, occasioned by the clattering of tin pattypans and a Dutch oven against the sides of the panniers. Much gingerbread was picked up in the street, and Mr. Lucy's windows were broken all to pieces. Had this been all, it would have been a comedy, but we learned the next morning that the poor woman's collar-bone was broken, and she has hardly been able to resume her occupation since.

What is added on the other side, if I could have persuaded myself to write sooner, would have reached you sooner; 'tis about ten days old. . . .

THE DOVES.*

The male dove was smoking a pipe, and the female dove was sewing, while she delivered herself as above. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye.

Yours, dear madam, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 8, 1780.

My dear Friend.—It is possible I might have indulged myself in the pleasure of writing to you, without waiting for a letter from you, but for a reason which you will not easily guess. Your mother communicated to me the satisfaction you expressed in my correspondence, that you thought me entertaining, and clever, and so forth. Now you must know I love praise dearly, especially from the judicious, and those who have so much delicacy themselves as not to offend mine in giving it. But then, I found this consequence attending, or likely to attend, the eulogium you bestowed—if my friend thought me witty before, he shall think me ten times more witty hereafter—where I joked once, I will joke five times, and, for one sensible remark, I will send him a dozen. Now this foolish vanity would have spoiled me quite, and would have made me as disgusting a letter-writer as Pope, who seems to have thought that unless a sentence was well turned, and every period pointed with some conceit, it was not worth the carriage. Accordingly he is to me, except in a very few instances, the most disagreeable maker of epistles that ever I met with. I was willing therefore to wait till the impression your commendation had made upon the foolish part of me was worn off, that I might scribble away as usual, and write my uppermost thoughts, and those only.

You are better skilled in ecclesiastical law than I am.—Mrs. P. desires me to inform her, whether a parson can be obliged to take an apprentice. For some of her husband's opposers, at D——, threaten to clap one upon him. Now I think it would be rather hard if clergymen, who are not allowed to exercise any handicraft whatever, should be subject to such an imposition. If Mr. P. was a cordwainer or a breeches-maker all the week and a preacher only on Sundays, it would seem reasonable enough in that case that he should take an apprentice if he chose it. But even then, in my poor judgment, he ought to be left to his option. If they mean by an apprentice a pupil whom they will oblige him to hew into a parson, and, after chipping away the block that hides the minister within, to qualify him to stand erect in a pulpit—that, indeed, is another consideration. But still we live in a free country, and I cannot bring myself even to suspect that an English divine can possibly be liable to such compulsion. Ask your uncle, however; for he is wiser in these things than either of us.

I thank you for your two inscriptions, and like the last the best; the thought is just and fine—but the two last lines are sadly damaged by the monkish jingle of *peperit* and *reperit*. I have not yet translated them, nor do I promise to do it, though at some idle hour perhaps I may. In return, I send you a translation of a simile in the Paradise Lost. Not having that poem at hand, I cannot refer you to the book and page, but you may hunt for it, if you think it worth your while. It begins—

"So when from mountain tops the dusky clouds Ascending," &c.

* Vide Cowper's Poems.

Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes,
Cum surgunt, et jam Boreæ tumida ora quiêrunt,
Cælum hilares abdit, spissâ caligine, vultus:
Tùm si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore,
Et croceo montes et pascua lumine tingat,
Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros,
Balatuque ovium colles, valesque resultant.

If you spy any fault in my Latin, tell me, for I am sometimes in doubt; but, as I told you when you was here, I have not a Latin book in the world to consult, or correct a mistake by, and some years have passed since I was a school-boy.

AN ENGLISH VERSIFICATION OF A THOUGHT THAT POPPED INTO MY HEAD ABOUT TWO MONTHS SINCE.

Sweet stream! that winds through yonder glade—
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid!—
Silent, and chaste, she steals along,
Far from the world's gay, busy throng,
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destin'd course:
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes;
Pure bosom'd, as that watery glass,
And heav'n reflected in her face.

Now this is not so exclusively applicable to a maiden as to be the sole property of your sister Shuttleworth. If you look at Mrs. Unwin, you will see that she has not lost her right to this just praise by marrying you.

Your mother sends her love to all, and mine comes jogging along by the side of it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, June 12, 1780.

Dear Sir,—We accept it as an effort of your friendship, that you could prevail with yourself, in a time of such terror and distress, to send us repeated accounts of yours and Mrs. Newton's welfare. You supposed, with reason enough, that we should be apprehensive for your safety, situated as you were, apparently within the reach of so much danger. We rejoice that you have escaped it all, and that, except the anxiety which you must have felt both for yourselves and others, you have suffered nothing upon this dreadful occasion. A metropolis in flames, and a nation in ruins, are subjects of contemplation for such a mind as yours, that will leave a lasting impression behind them.* It is well that the design died in the execution, and will be buried, I hope, never to rise again, in the ashes of its own combustion. There is a melancholy pleasure in looking back upon such a scene, arising from a comparison of possibilities with facts; the enormous bulk of the intended mischief, with the abortive and partial accomplishment of it: much was done, more indeed than could have been supposed practicable in a well-regulated city, not unfurnished with a military force for its protection. But surprise and astonishment seem, at first, to have struck every nerve of the police with a palsy, and to have disarmed government of all its powers.*

I congratulate you upon the wisdom that withheld you from entering yourself a member of the Protestant Association. Your friends who did so have reason enough to regret their doing it, even though they should never be called upon. Innocent as they are, and they who know them cannot doubt of their being perfectly so, it is likely to bring an odium on the profession they make that will not soon be forgotten. Neither is it possible for a quiet, inoffensive man to discover on a sudden that his zeal has carried him into such company, without being to the last degree shocked at his imprudence. *Their* religion was an honorable mantle, like that of Elijah, but the majority wore cloaks of Guy Fawkes's time, and meant nothing so little as what they pretended. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 18, 1780.

Reverend and dear William,—The affairs of kingdoms and the concerns of individuals are variegated alike with the chequer-work of joy and sorrow. The news of a great acquisition in America† has succeeded to terri-

* The event here alluded to was a crisis of great national danger. It originated in the concessions granted by Parliament to the Roman Catholics, in consequence of which a licentious mob assembled in great multitudes in St. George's Fields, and excited the greatest alarm by their unbridled fury. They proceeded to destroy all the Romish chapels in London and its vicinity. The prisons of Newgate, the Fleet, and King's Bench, were attacked, and exposed to the devouring flame. The Bank itself was threatened with an assault, when a well-disciplined band, called the London Association, aided by the regular troops, dispersed the multitude, but not without the slaughter of about two hundred and twenty of the most active ringleaders. The whole city presented a melancholy scene of riot and devastation; and the houses of many private individuals were involved in the ruin. The house of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield was the particular object of popular fury. Lord George Gordon, who acted a prominent part on this occasion, was afterwards brought to trial, and his defence undertaken by Mr. Kenyon, afterwards well known by the title of Lord Kenyon. Various facts and circumstances having been adduced in favor of Lord George Gordon, his lordship was acquitted. It is instructive to contemplate the tide of human passions and events, and to contrast this spirit of religious persecution with the final removal of Catholic disabilities at a later period.

* Cowper alludes to this afflicting page in our domestic history, in his Table Talk:—

When tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar;
When he usurp'd authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face,
When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy,
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy.

† The surrender of Charles-Town, in South Carolina, to Admiral Arbuthnot and General Sir Henry Clinton.

ble tumults in London, and the beams of prosperity are now playing upon the smoke of that conflagration which so lately terrified the whole land. These sudden changes, which are matter of every man's observation, and may therefore always be reasonably expected, serve to hold up the chin of despondency above water, and preserve mankind in general from the sin and misery of accounting existence a burden not to be endured—an evil we should be sure to encounter, if we were not warranted to look for a bright reverse of our most afflictive experiences. The Spaniards were sick of the war at the very commencement of it: and I hope that by this time the French themselves begin to find themselves a little indisposed, if not desirous of peace, which that restless and meddling temper of theirs is incapable of desiring for its own sake. But is it true that this detestable plot was an egg laid in France, and hatched in London, under the influence of French corruption?—*Nam te scire, deos quoniam propius contingis, oportet.* The offspring has the features of such a parent, and yet, without the clearest proof of the fact, I would not willingly charge upon a civilized nation what perhaps the most barbarous would abhor the thought of. I no sooner saw the surmise, however, in the paper, than I immediately began to write Latin verses upon the occasion. "An odd effect," you will say, "of such a circumstance?"—but an effect, nevertheless, that whatever has at any time moved my passions, whether pleasantly or otherwise, has always had upon me. Were I to express what I feel on such occasions in prose, it would be verbose, inflated, and disgusting. I therefore have recourse to verse, as a suitable vehicle for the most vehement expressions my thoughts suggest to me. What I have written, I did not write so much for the comfort of the English as for the mortification of the French. You will immediately perceive therefore that I have been laboring in vain, and that this bouncing explosion is likely to spend itself in the air. For I have no means of circulating what follows through all the French territories; and unless that, or something like it, can be done, my indignation will be entirely fruitless. Tell me how I can convey it into Sartine's pocket, or who will lay it upon his desk for me. But read it first, and, unless you think it pointed enough to sting the Gaul to the quick, burn it.

IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM, CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS, UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTAM.

Perfida, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conduxit et urit
Undique privatas patriciasque domos.
Nequicquàm conata sua, fœdissima sperat
Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

I have lately exercised my ingenuity in contriving an exercise for yours, and have composed a riddle which, if it does not make you laugh before you have solved it, will probably do it afterwards. I would transcribe it now, but am really so fatigued with writing, that, unless I knew you had a quinsy, and that a fit of laughter might possibly save your life, I could not prevail with myself to do it.

What could you possibly mean, slender as you are, by sallying out upon your two walking sticks at two in the morning, in the midst of such a tumult? We admire your prowess, but cannot commend your prudence.

Our love attends you all, collectively and individually.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 22, 1780.

My dear Friend,—A word or two in answer to two or three questions of yours, which I have hitherto taken no notice of. I am not in a scribbling mood, and shall therefore make no excursions to amuse either myself or you. The needful will be as much as I can manage at present—the playful must wait another opportunity.

I thank you for your offer of Robertson, but I have more reading upon my hands at this present writing than I shall get rid of in a twelvemonth, and this moment recollect that I have seen it already. He is an author that I admire much, with one exception, that I think his style is too labored. Hume, as an historian, pleases me more.

I have just read enough of the Biographia Britannica to say that I have tasted it, and have no doubt but I shall like it. I am pretty much in the garden at this season of the year, so read but little. In summer-time I am as giddy-headed as a boy, and can settle to nothing. Winter condenses me, and makes me lumpish and sober; and then I can read all day long.

For the same reasons, I have no need of the landscapes at present; when I want them I will renew my application, and repeat the description, but it will hardly be before October.

Before I rose this morning, I composed the three following stanzas; I send them because I like them pretty well myself; and, if you should not, you must accept this handsome compliment as an amends for their deficien-

cies. You may print the lines, if you judge them worth it.*

I have only time to add love, &c., and my two initials. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, June 23, 1780.

My dear Friend,—Your reflections upon the state of London, the sins and enormities of that great city, while you had a distant view of it from Greenwich, seem to have been prophetic of the heavy stroke that fell upon it just after. Man often prophesies without knowing it—a spirit speaks by him, which is not his own, though he does not at that time suspect that he is under the influence of any other. Did he foresee what is always foreseen by Him who dictates, what he supposes to be his own, he would suffer by anticipation as well as by consequence, and wish perhaps as ardently for the happy ignorance to which he is at present so much indebted, as some have foolishly and inconsiderately done for a knowledge that would be but another name for misery.

And why have I said all this, especially to you who have hitherto said it to me? not because I had the least desire of informing a wiser man than myself, but because the observation was naturally suggested by the recollection of your letter, and that letter, though not the last, happened to be uppermost in my mind. I can compare this mind of mine to nothing that resembles it more than to a board that is under the carpenter's plane, (I mean while I am writing to you,) the shavings are my uppermost thoughts; after a few strokes of the tool it acquires a new surface; this again upon a repetition of his task he takes off, and a new surface still succeeds: whether the shavings of the present day will be worth your acceptance, I know not; I am unfortunately made neither of cedar nor mahogany, but *Truncus ficulnus, inutile lignum*—consequently, though I should be planed till I am as thin as a wafer, it will be but rubbish to the last.

It is not strange that you should be the subject of a false report, for the sword of slander, like that of war, devours one as well as another: and a blameless character is particularly delicious to its unsparing appetite. But that you should be the object of such a report, you who meddle less with the designs of government than almost any man that lives under it, this is strange indeed. It is well, however, when they who account it good sport to traduce the reputation of another invent a story that refutes itself. I wonder they do not always endeavor to accommodate their fiction to the real character of the person; their tale would then, at least, have an air of probability, and it might cost a peaceable good man much more trouble to disprove it. But perhaps it would not be easy to discern what part of your conduct lies more open to such an attempt than another, or what it is that you either say or do, at any time, that presents a fair opportunity to the most ingenious slanderer to slip in a falsehood between your words or actions, that shall seem to be of a piece with either. You hate compliment, I know, but, by your leave, this is not one—it is a truth—worse and worse—now I have praised you indeed—well you must thank yourself for it, it was absolutely done without the least intention on my part, and proceeded from a pen, that, as far as I can remember, was never guilty of flattery, since I knew how to hold it. He that slanders me, paints me blacker than I am, and he that flatters me, whiter—they both daub me, and when I look in the glass of conscience, I see myself disguised by both—I had as lief my tailor should sew gingerbread-nuts on my coat instead of buttons as that any man should call my Bristol stone a diamond. The tailor's trick would not at all embellish my suit, nor the flatterer's make me at all the richer. I never make a present to my friend of what I dislike myself. Ergo, (I have reached the conclusion at last,) I did not mean to flatter you.

We have sent a petition to Lord Dartmouth, by this post, praying him to interfere in parliament in behalf of the poor lacemakers. I say we, because I have signed it. —Mr. G. drew it up. Mr. —— did not think it grammatical, therefore would not sign it. Yet I think, Priscian himself would have pardoned the manner for the sake of the matter. I dare say if his lordship does not comply with the prayer of it, it will not be because he thinks it of more consequence to write grammatically than that the poor should eat, but for some better reason.

My love to all under your roof.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 2, 1780.

Carissime, I am glad of your confidence, and have reason to hope I shall never abuse it. If you trust me with a secret, I am hermetically sealed; and if you call for the exercise of my judgment, such as it is, I am never freakish or wanton in the use of it, much less mischievous and malignant. Critics, I believe, do not often stand so clear of those vices as I do. I like your epitaph, except that I doubt the propriety of the word *immaturus;* which, I think, is rather applicable to fruits than flowers; and except the last

* Verses on the burning of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield's house, during the riots in London.

pentameter, the assertion it contains being rather too obvious a thought to finish with; not that I think an epitaph should be pointed like an epigram. But still there is a closeness of thought and expression necessary in the conclusion of all these little things, that they may leave an agreeable flavor upon the palate. Whatever is short should be nervous, masculine, and compact. Little men are so; and little poems should be so; because, where the work is short, the author has no right to the plea of weariness, and laziness is never admitted as an available excuse in anything. Now you know my opinion, you will very likely improve upon my improvement, and alter my alterations for the better. To touch and retouch is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse. I am never weary of it myself, and, if you would take as much pains as I do, you would have no need to ask for my corrections.

HIC SEPULTUS EST
INTER SUORUM LACRYMAS
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
GULIELMI ET MARIÆ FILIUS
UNICUS, UNICE DILECTUS,
QUI FLORIS RITU SUCCISUS EST SEMIHIANTIS,
APRILIS DIE SEPTIMO,
1780, ÆT. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Nam quo iterum tecum, sim modo dignus, ero.
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.*

Having an English translation of it by me, I send it though it may be of no use.

Farewell! "But not forever," Hope replies.
Trace but his steps, and meet him in the skies!
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again.

The stanzas that I sent you are maiden ones, having never been seen by any eye but your mother's and your own.

If you send me franks, I shall write longer letters.—*Valete, sicut et nos valemus! Amate, sicut et nos amamus!* W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Olney, June 3, 1780.

Mon Ami,—By this time, I suppose, you have ventured to take your fingers out of your ears, being delivered from the deafening shouts of the most zealous mob that ever strained their lungs in the cause of religion. I congratulate you upon a gentle relapse into the customary sounds of a great city, which, though we rustics abhor them, as noisy and dissonant, are a musical and sweet murmur, compared with what you have lately heard. The tinkling of a kennel may be distinguished now, where the roaring of a cascade would have been sunk and lost. I never suspected, till the newspapers informed me of it, a few days since, that the barbarous uproar had reached Great Queen Street. I hope Mrs. Hill was in the country, and shall rejoice to hear that, as I am sure you did not take up the protestant cudgels* upon this hair-brained occasion, so you have not been pulled in pieces as a papist. W. C.

The next letter to Mr. Hill affords a striking proof of Cowper's compassionate feelings towards the poor around him.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, July 8, 1780.

Mon Ami,—If you ever take the tip of the chancellor's ear between your finger and thumb, you can hardly improve the opportunity to better purpose, than if you should whisper into it the voice of compassion and lenity to the lace-makers. I am an eye-witness to their poverty, and do know that hundreds in this little town are upon the point of starving; and that the most unremitting industry is but barely sufficient to keep them from it. I know that the bill by which they would have been so fatally affected is thrown out, but Lord Stormont threatens them with another; and if another like it should pass, they are undone. We lately sent a petition to Lord Dartmouth; I signed it, and am sure the contents are true. The purport of it was to inform him, that there are very near one thousand two hundred lace-makers in this beggarly town, the most of whom had reason enough, while the bill was in agitation, to look upon every loaf they bought as the last they should ever be able to earn. I can never think it good policy to incur the certain inconvenience of ruining thirty thousand, in order to prevent a remote and possible damage, though to a much greater number. The measure is like a scythe, and the poor lace-makers are the sickly crop, that trembles before the edge of it. The prospect of a peace with America is like the streak of dawn in their horizon; but this bill is like a black cloud behind it, that threatens their hope of a comfortable day with utter extinction.

* These lines of Mr. Unwin, and here retouched by Cowper's pen, bear a strong resemblance to the beautiful Epitaph, composed by Bishop Lowth, on the death of his beloved daughter, which seem to have suggested some hints, in the composition of the above epitaph to Northcote.

Cara, vale, ingenio præstans, pietate, pudore,
Et plus quam mitæ nomine cara, vale.
Cara Maria, vale: at veniet felicius ævum,
Quando iterum tecum, sim modo dignus, ero.
Cara redi, lætâ tum dicam voce, paternos
Eja age in amplexus, cara Maria, redi.

† Private correspondence.

* The alarm taken at the concessions made in favor of the Catholics was such, that many persons formed themselves into an association, for the defence of Protestant principles.—Ed.

I did not perceive, till this moment, that I had tacked two similes together, a practice which, though warranted by the example of Homer, and allowed in an Epic Poem, is rather luxuriant and licentious in a letter; lest I should add another, I conclude.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 11, 1780.

I account myself sufficiently commended for my Latin exercise, by the number of translations it has undergone. That which you distinguished in the margin by the title of "better" was the production of a friend, and, except that, for a modest reason, he omitted the third couplet, I think it a good one. To finish the group, I have translated it myself; and, though I would not wish you to give it to the world, for more reasons than one, especially lest some French hero should call me to account for it, I add it on the other side. An author ought to be the best judge of his own meaning: and, whether I have succeeded or not, I cannot but wish, that where a translator is wanted, the writer was always to be his own.

False, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part;
To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street, and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own.
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,
We always spare a coward on his knees.*

I have often wondered that Dryden's illustrious epigram on Milton,† (in my mind the second best that ever was made) has never been translated into Latin, for the admiration of the learned in other countries. I have at last presumed to venture upon the task myself. The great closeness of the original, which is equal, in that respect, to the most compact Latin I ever saw, made it extremely difficult.

Tres tria, sed longè distantia, sæcula vates
Ostentant tribus è gentibus eximios.
Græciæ sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrique parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est,
Tertius ut fieret, consociare duos.

I have not one bright thought upon the chancellor's recovery: nor can I strike off so much as one sparkling atom from that brilliant subject. It is not when I will, nor upon what I will, but as a thought happens to occur to me; and then I versify, whether I will or not. I never write but for my amusement; and what I write is sure to answer that end, if it answers no other. If, besides this purpose, the more desirable one of entertaining you be effected, I then receive double fruit of my labor, and consider this produce of it as a second crop, the more valuable because less expected. But when I have once remitted a composition to you, I have done with it. It is pretty certain that I shall never read it or think of it again. From that moment I have constituted you sole judge of its accomplishments, if it has any, and of its defects, which it is sure to have.

For this reason I decline answering the question with which you concluded your last, and cannot persuade myself to enter into a critical examen of the two pieces upon Lord Mansfield's loss,* either with respect to their intrinsic or comparative merit, and, indeed, after having rather discouraged that use of them which you had designed, there is no occasion for it.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, July 12, 1780.

My dear Friend,—Such nights as I frequently spend are but a miserable prelude to the succeeding day, and indispose me above all things to the business of writing. Yet, with a pen in my hand, if I am able to write at all, I find myself gradually relieved; and as I am glad of any employment that may serve to engage my attention, so especially I am pleased with an opportunity of conversing with you, though it be but upon paper. This occupation above all others assists me in that self-deception to which I am indebted for all the little comfort I enjoy; things seem to be as they were, and I almost forget that they never can be so again.

We are both obliged to you for a sight of Mr. ——'s letter. The friendly and obliging manner of it will much enhance the difficulty of answering it. I think I can see plainly that, though he does not hope for your applause, he would gladly escape your censure. He seems to approach you smoothly and softly, and to take you gently by the hand, as if he bespoke your lenity, and entreated you at least to spare him. You have such skill in the management of your pen that I doubt not you will be able to send him a balmy reproof, that shall give him no reason to complain of a broken head. How delu-

* These lines are founded on the suspicion, prevalent at that time, that the fires in London were owing to French gold, circulated for the purposes of corruption.

† Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
The next in majesty, in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go,
To make a third she joined the other two.

* Lord Chief Justice Mansfield incurred the loss, on this occasion, of one of the most complete and valuable collections of law books ever known, together with manuscripts and legal remarks, the result of his own industry and professional knowledge.

† Private correspondence.

sive is the wildest speculation, when pursued with eagerness, and nourished with such arguments as the perverted ingenuity of such a mind as his can easily furnish! Judgment falls asleep upon the bench, while Imagination, like a smug, pert counsellor, stands chattering at the bar, and, with a deal of fine-spun, enchanting sophistry, carries all before him.

If I had strength of mind, I have not strength of body for the task which, you say, some would impose upon me. I cannot bear much thinking. The meshes of that fine network, the brain, are composed of such mere spinners' threads in me, that when a long thought finds its way into them, it buzzes, and twangs, and bustles about at such a rate as seems to threaten the whole contexture. No—I must needs refer it again to you.

My enigma will probably find you out, and you will find out my enigma, at some future time. I am not in a humor to transcribe it now. Indeed I wonder that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state. His antic gesticulations would be unseasonable at any rate, but more especially so if they should distort the features of the mournful attendants into laughter. But the mind, long wearied with the sameness of a dull, dreary prospect, will gladly fix its eyes on anything that may make a little variety in its contemplations, though it were but a kitten playing with her tail.

You would believe, though I did not say it at the end of every letter, that we remember you and Mrs. Newton with the same affection as ever: but I would not therefore excuse myself from writing what it gives you pleasure to read. I have often wished indeed, when writing to an ordinary correspondent, for the revival of the Roman custom—*salutis* at top, and *vale* at bottom. But as the French have taught all Europe to enter a room and to leave it with a most ceremonious bow, so they have taught us to begin and conclude our letters in the same manner. However, I can say to you,

Sans ceremonie,
Adieu, *mon ami!* W. C.

The poet's affectionate effort in renewing his correspondence with Mrs. Cowper, to whom he had been accustomed to pour forth his heart without reserve, appears to have had a beneficial effect on his reviving spirits. His pathetic letter to that lady was followed, in the course of two months, by a letter of a more lively cast, in which the reader will find some touches of his native humor, and a vein of pleasantry peculiar to himself.

TO MRS. COWPER.

July 20, 1780.

My dear Cousin,—Mr. Newton having desired me to be of the party, I am come to meet him. You see me sixteen years older, at the least, than when I saw you last; but the effects of time seem to have taken place rather on the outside of my head than within it. What was brown is become grey, but what was foolish remains foolish still. Green fruit must rot before it ripens, if the season is such as to afford it nothing but cold winds and dark clouds, that interrupt every ray of sunshine. My days steal away silently, and march on (as poor mad Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them: yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young.

I am fond of writing as an amusement, but do not always find it one. Being rather scantily furnished with subjects that are good for anything, and corresponding only with those who have no relish for such as are good for nothing, I often find myself reduced to the necessity, the disagreeable necessity, of writing about myself. This does not mend the matter much, for, though in a description of my own condition, I discover abundant materials to employ my pen upon, yet as the task is not very agreeable to *me*, so I am sufficiently aware, that it is likely to prove irksome to others. A painter who should confine himself, in the exercise of his art, to the drawing of his own picture, must be a wonderful coxcomb if he did not soon grow sick of his occupation, and be peculiarly fortunate if he did not make others as sick as himself.

Remote as your dwelling is from the late scene of riot and confusion, I hope that, though you could not but hear the report, you heard no more, and that the roarings of the mad multitude did not reach you. That was a day of terror to the innocent, and the present is a day of still greater terror to the guilty. The law was, for a few moments, like an arrow in the quiver, seemed to be of no use, and did no execution; now it is an arrow upon the string, and many who despised it lately are trembling as they stand before the point of it.

I have talked more already than I have formerly done in three visits—you remember my taciturnity, never to be forgotten by those who knew me; not to depart entirely from what might be, for aught I know, the most shining part of my character, I here shut my mouth, make my bow, and return to Olney.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 27, 1780.

My dear Friend,—As two men sit silent, after having exhausted all their topics of conversation; one says, "It is very fine weather," and the other says, "Yes;"—one blows his nose, and the other rubs his eye-brows; (by the way, this is very much in Homer's manner:) such seems to be the case between you and me. After a silence of some days, I wrote you a long something, that (I suppose) was nothing to the purpose, because it has not afforded you materials for an answer. Nevertheless, as it often happens in the case above stated, one of the distressed parties, being deeply sensible of the awkwardness of a dumb duet, breaks silence again, and resolves to speak, though he has nothing to say, so it fares with me. I am with you again in the form of an epistle, though, considering my present emptiness, I have reason to fear that your only joy upon the occasion will be, that it is conveyed to you in a frank.

When I began, I expected no interruption. But, if I had expected interruptions without end, I should have been less disappointed. First came the barber; who, after having embellished the outside of my head, has left the inside just as unfurnished as he found it. Then came Olney bridge, not into the house, but into the conversation. The cause relating to it was tried on Tuesday at Buckingham. The Judge directed the jury to find a verdict favorable to Olney. The jury consisted of one knave and eleven fools. The last-mentioned followed the afore-mentioned as sheep follow a bell-wether, and decided in direct opposition to the said judge: then a flaw was discovered in the indictment:—the indictment was quashed, and an order made for a new trial. The new trial will be in the King's Bench, where said knave and said fools will have nothing to do with it. So the men of Olney fling up their caps, and assure themselves of a complete victory. A victory will save me and your mother many shillings, perhaps some pounds, which, except that it has afforded me a subject to write upon, was the only reason why I said so much about it. I know you take an interest in all that concerns us, and will consequently rejoice with us in the prospect of an event in which we are concerned so nearly.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 30, 1780.

My dear Sir,—You may think perhaps that I deal more liberally with Mr. Unwin, in the way of poetical export, than I do with you, and I believe you have reason. The truth is this: if I walked the streets with a fiddle under my arm, I should never think of performing before the window of a privy councillor or a chief justice, but should rather make free with ears more likely to be open to such amusement. The trifles I produce in this way are indeed such trifles that I cannot think them seasonable presents for you. Mr. Unwin himself would not be offended if I was to tell him that there is this difference between him and Mr. Newton; that the latter is already an apostle, while he himself is only undergoing the business of incubation, with a hope that he may be hatched in time. When my muse comes forth arrayed in sables, at least in a robe of graver cast, I make no scruple to direct her to my friend at Hoxton. This has been one reason why I have so long delayed the riddle. But lest I should seem to set a value upon it that I do not, by making it an object of still further inquiry, here it comes.

I am just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
And the parent of numbers that cannot be told,
I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault,
I am often sold dear—good for nothing when bought,
An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
And yielded with pleasure—when taken by force.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Aug. 6, 1780.

My dear Friend,—You like to hear from me—this is a very good reason why I should write—but I have nothing to say—this seems equally a good reason why I should not; yet if you had alighted from your horse at our door this morning, and, at this present writing, being five o'clock in the afternoon, had found occasion to say to me—"Mr. Cowper, you have not spoke since I came in; have you resolved never to speak again?"—it would be but a poor reply, if, in answer to the summons, I should plead inability as my best and only excuse. And this, by the way, suggests to me a seasonable piece of instruction, and reminds me of what I am very apt to forget when I have any epistolary business in hand; that a letter may be written upon anything or nothing, just as that anything or nothing happens to occur. A man that has a journey before him twenty miles in length, which he is to perform on foot, will not hesitate and doubt whether he shall set out or not, because he does not readily conceive how he shall ever reach the end of it; for he knows that, by the simple operation of moving one foot forward first and then the other, he shall be sure to accomplish it. So it is in the present case, and so it is in every similar case. A letter is written, as a conversation is maintained or a journey performed, not by preconcerted or

premeditated means, a new contrivance, or an invention never heard of before; but merely by maintaining a progress, and resolving, as a postilion does, having once set out, never to stop till we reach the appointed end. If a man may talk without thinking, why may he not write upon the same terms? A grave gentleman of the last century, a tie-wig, square-toe, Steinkirk figure, would say, "My good sir, a man has no right to do either." But it is to be hoped that the present century has nothing to do with the mouldy opinions of the last; and so, good Sir Launcelot, or St. Paul, or whatever be your name, step into your picture-frame again, and look as if you thought for another century, and leave us moderns in the mean time to think when we can, and to write whether we can or not, else we might as well be dead as you are.

When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls, and painted casements, the gothic porch, smothered with honeysuckles, their little gardens, and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible that a people who resembled us so little in their taste should resemble us in anything else. But in everything else I suppose they were our counterparts exactly, and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims, are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in the days of yore, for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress.

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Aug. 10, 1780.

My dear Sir,—I greet you at your castle of Buen Retiro, and wish you could enjoy the unmixed pleasures of the country there. But it seems you are obliged to dash the cup with a portion of those bitters you are always swallowing in town. Well—you are honorably and usefully employed, and ten times more beneficially to society than if you were piping to a few sheep under a spreading beech, or listening to a tinkling rill. Besides, by the effect of long custom and habitual practice, you are not only enabled to endure your occupation, but even find it agreeable. I remember the time when it would not have suited you so well to have devoted so large a part of your vacation to the objects of your profession; and you, I dare say, have not forgot what a seasonable relaxation you found, when lying at full stretch upon the ruins of an old wall, by the sea side, you amused yourself with Tasso's Jerusalem and the Pastor Fido. I recollect that we both pitied Mr. De Grey, when we called at his cottage at Taplow, and found, not the master indeed, but his desk, with his white-leaved folio upon it, which bespoke him as much a man of business in his retirement as in Westminster Hall. But by these steps he ascended the bench.* Now he may read what he pleases, and ride where he will, if the gout will give him leave. And you, who have no gout, and probably never will, when your hour of dismission comes, will, for that reason, if for no other, be a happier man than he.

I am, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours. W. C.

P. S.—Mr. —— has not thought proper to favor me with his book, and having no interest in the subject, I have not thought proper to purchase it. Indeed I have no curiosity to read what I am sure must be erroneous before I read it. Truth is worth everything that can be given for it; but a mere display of ingenuity, calculated only to mislead, is worth nothing.

The following letter shows the sportiveness of his imagination on the minutest subjects.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Aug. 21, 1780.

The following occurrence ought not to be passed over in silence, in a place where so few notable ones are to be met with. Last Wednesday night, while we were at supper, between the hours of eight and nine, I heard an unusual noise in the back parlor, as if one of the hares was entangled and endeavoring to disengage herself. I was just going to rise from table when it ceased. In about five minutes a voice on the outside of the parlor door inquired if one of my hares had got away. I immediately rushed into the next room, and found that my poor favorite puss had made her escape. She had gnawed in sunder the strings of a lattice work, with which I thought I had sufficiently secured

* Private correspondence.

* This distinguished lawyer was a connexion of Cowper's, having married Mary, daughter of William Cowper, of the Park, near Hertford, Esq. After having successively passed through the offices of Solicitor and Attorney General, he was advanced to the dignity of Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and subsequently elevated to the Peerage by the title of Baron Wilmington.

the window, and which I preferred to any other sort of blind, because it admitted plenty of air. From thence I hastened to the kitchen, where I saw the redoubtable Thomas Freeman, who told me that, having seen her just after she dropped into the street, he attempted to cover her with his hat, but she screamed out, and leaped directly over his head. I then desired him to pursue as fast as possible, and added Richard Coleman to the chase, as being nimbler, and carrying less weight than Thomas; not expecting to see her again, but desirous to learn, if possible, what became of her. In something less than an hour, Richard returned, almost breathless, with the following account: that, soon after he began to run, he left Tom behind him, and came in sight of a most numerous hunt of men, women, children, and dogs; that he did his best to keep back the dogs, and presently outstripped the crowd, so that the race was at last disputed between himself and puss: she ran right through the town, and down the lane that leads to Dropshot. A little before she came to the house, he got the start and turned her; she pushed for the town again, and soon after she entered it sought shelter in Mr. Wagstaff's tan-yard, adjoining to old Mr. Drake's. Sturges's harvest men were at supper, and saw her from the opposite side of the way. There she encountered the tan-pits full of water, and, while she was struggling out of one pit, and plunging into another, and almost drowned, one of the men drew her out by the ears, and secured her. She was then well washed in a bucket to get the lime out of her coat, and brought home in a sack at ten o'clock.

This frolic cost us four shillings, but you may believe that we did not grudge a farthing of it. The poor creature received only a little hurt in one of her claws and one of her ears, and is now almost as well as ever.

I do not call this an answer to your letter, but such as it is I send it, presuming upon that interest which I know you take in my minutest concerns, which I cannot express better than in the words of Terence, a little varied—*Nihil mei a te alienum putas.*

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Olney, Aug. 31, 1780.

My dear Cousin,—I am obliged to you for your long letter, which did not seem so, and for your short one, which was more than I had any reason to expect. Short as it was, it conveyed to me two interesting articles of intelligence,—an account of your recovering from a fever, and of Lady Cowper's death. The latter was, I suppose, to be expected, for, by what remembrance I have of her Ladyship, who was never much acquainted with her, she had reached those years that are always found upon the borders of another world. As for you, your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of death as much as you please, (you cannot think of it too much,) but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends, who were already grown old when I saw them last, are old still, but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young as being older than they were. Not having been an eye-witness of the change that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and, while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws (as our grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury, to others. But, though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so; though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands: if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them, who, like you, can stand a-tiptoe on the mountain-top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished.

When you can favor me with a little account of your own family, without inconvenience, I shall be glad to receive it, for, though separated from my kindred by little more than half a century of miles, I know as little of their concerns as if oceans and continents were interposed between us.

Yours, my dear cousin, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 3, 1780.

My dear Friend,—I am glad you are so provident, and that, while you are young, you have furnished yourself with the means of comfort in old age. Your crutch and your pipe may be of use to you, (and may they be so!) should your years be extended to an antediluvian date; and, for your perfect ac-

commodation, you seem to want nothing but a clerk called Snuffle, and a sexton of the name of Skeleton, to make your ministerial equipage complete.

I think I have read as much of the first volume of the Biographia as I shall ever read. I find it very amusing; more so, perhaps, than it would have been, had they sifted their characters with more exactness, and admitted none but those who had in some way or other entitled themselves to immortality by deserving well of the public. Such a compilation would perhaps have been more judicious, though I confess it would have afforded less variety. The priests and monks of earlier and the doctors of later days, who have signalized themselves by nothing but a controversial pamphlet, long since thrown by and never to be perused again, might have been forgotten, without injury or loss to the national character for learning or genius. This observation suggested to me the following lines, which may serve to illustrate my meaning, and at the same time to give my criticism a sprightlier air.

O fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age;
Those twinkling, tiny lustres of the land,
Drop one by one, from Fame's neglecting hand;
Lethean gulphs receive them as they fall,
And dark Oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child (as playful children use)
Has burnt to cinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct he views the roving fire,
There goes my lady, and there goes the 'squire,
There goes the parson—O illustrious spark!
And there—scarce less illustrious—goes the clerk!

Virgil admits none but worthies into the Elysian fields; I cannot recollect the lines in which he describes them all, but these in particular I well remember:

Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo,
Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes.

A chaste and scrupulous conduct like this would well become the writer of national biography. But enough of this.

Our respects attend Miss Shuttleworth, with many thanks for her intended present. Some purses derive all their value from their contents, but these will have an intrinsic value of their own; and, though mine should be often empty, which is not an improbable supposition, I shall still esteem it highly on its own account.

If you could meet with a second-hand Virgil, ditto Homer, both Iliad and Odyssey, together with a Clavis, for I have no Lexicon, and all tolerably cheap, I shall be obliged to you if you will make the purchase.

Yours, W. C.

The three following letters are interesting, as containing Cowper's sentiments on the subject of education.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 7, 1780.

My dear Friend,—As many gentlemen as there are in the world, who have children, and heads capable of reflecting upon the important subject of their education, so many opinions there are about it, and many of them just and sensible, though almost all differing from each other. With respect to the education of boys, I think they are generally made to draw in Latin and Greek trammels too soon. It is pleasing no doubt to a parent to see his child already in some sort a proficient in those languages, at an age when most others are entirely ignorant of them; but hence it often happens that a boy, who could construe a fable of Æsop at six or seven years of age, having exhausted his little stock of attention and diligence in making that notable acquisition, grows weary of his task, conceives a dislike for study, and perhaps makes but a very indifferent progress afterwards. The mind and body have, in this respect, a striking resemblance to each other. In childhood they are both nimble, but not strong; they can skip and frisk about with wonderful agility, but hard labor spoils them both. In maturer years they become less active, but more vigorous, more capable of a fixed application, and can make themselves sport with that which a little earlier would have affected them with intolerable fatigue. I should recommend it to you, therefore, (but after all you must judge for yourself,) to allot the two next years of little John's scholarship to writing and arithmetic, together with which, for variety's sake, and because it is capable of being formed into an amusement, I would mingle geography, (a science which, if not attended to betimes, is seldom made an object of much consideration,) essentially necessary to the accomplishment of a gentleman, yet, as I know (by sad experience) imperfectly, if at all, inculcated in the schools. Lord Spencer's son, when he was four years of age, knew the situation of every kingdom, country, city, river, and remarkable mountain in the world. For this attainment, which I suppose his father had never made, he was indebted to a play-thing: having been accustomed to amuse himself with those maps which are cut into several compartments, so as to be thrown into a heap of confusion, that they may be put together again with an exact coincidence of all their angles and bearings, so as to form a perfect whole.

If he begins Latin and Greek at eight, or even at nine years of age, it is surely soon enough. Seven years, the usual allowance

for these acquisitions, are more than sufficient for the purpose, especially with his readiness in learning; for you would hardly wish to have him qualified for the university before fifteen, a period in my mind much too early for it, and when he could hardly be trusted there without the utmost danger to his morals. Upon the whole you will perceive that, in my judgment, the difficulty, as well as the wisdom, consists more in bridling in and keeping back a boy of his parts than in pushing him forward. If therefore at the end of the two years, instead of putting a grammar into his hand, you should allow him to amuse himself with some agreeable writers upon the subject of natural philosophy for another year, I think it would answer well. There is a book called Cosmotheoria Puerilis, there are Derham's Physico and Astro-theology, together with several others in the same manner, very intelligible even to a child, and full of useful instruction.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 17, 1780.

My dear Friend,—You desire my further thoughts on the subject of education. I send you such as had for the most part occurred to me when I wrote last, but could not be comprised in a single letter. They are indeed on a different branch of this interesting theme, but not less important than the former.

I think it your happiness, and wish you to think it so yourself, that you are in every respect qualified for the task of instructing your son, and preparing him for the university, without committing him to the care of a stranger. In my judgment, a domestic education deserves the preference to a public one, on a hundred accounts, which I have neither time nor room to mention. I shall only touch upon two or three, that I cannot but consider as having a right to your most earnest attention.

In a public school, or indeed in any school, his morals are sure to be but little attended to, and his religion not at all. If he can catch the love of virtue from the fine things that are spoken of it in the classics, and the love of holiness from the customary attendance upon such preaching as he is likely to hear, it will be well; but I am sure you have had too many opportunities to observe the ineffieacy of such means to expect any such advantage from them. In the meantime, the more powerful influence of bad example and perhaps bad company, will continually counterwork these only preservatives he can meet with, and may possibly send him home to you, at the end of five or six years, such as you will be sorry to see him. You escaped indeed the contagion yourself, but a few instances of happy exemption from a general malady are not sufficient warrant to conclude that it is therefore not infectious, or may be encountered without danger.

You have seen too much of the world, and are a man of too much reflection, not to have observed, that in proportion as the sons of a family approach to years of maturity they lose a sense of obligation to their parents, and seem at last almost divested of that tender affection which the nearest of all relations seems to demand from them. I have often observed it myself, and have always thought I could sufficiently account for it, without laying all the blame upon the children. While they continue in their parents' house, they are every day obliged, and every day reminded how much it is to their interest as well as duty, to be obliging and affectionate in return. But at eight or nine years of age, the boy goes to school. From that moment he becomes a stranger in his father's house. The course of parental kindness is interrupted. The smiles of his mother, those tender admonitions, and the solicitous care of both his parents, are no longer before his eyes—year after year he feels himself more and more detached from them, till at last he is so effectually weaned from the connexion, as to find himself happier anywhere than in their company.

I should have been glad of a frank for this letter, for I have said but little of what I could say upon the subject, and perhaps I may not be able to catch it by the end again. If I can, I shall add to it hereafter.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 5, 1780.

My dear Friend,—Now for the sequel—you have anticipated one of my arguments in favor of a private education, therefore I need say but little about it. The folly of supposing that the mother-tongue, in some respects the most difficult of all tongues, may be acquired without a teacher, is predominant in all the public schools that I have ever heard of. To pronounce it well, to speak and to write it with fluency and elegance, are no easy attainments; not one in fifty of those who pass through Westminster and Eton arrives at any remarkable proficiency in these accomplishments; and they that do, are more indebted to their own study and application for it than to any instruction received there. In general, there is nothing so pedantic as the style of a schoolboy, if he aims at any style at all; and if he does not, he is of course inelegant and perhaps ungrammatical—a defect, no doubt, in great

measure owing to want of cultivation, for the same lad that is often commended for his Latin frequently would deserve to be whipped for his English, if the fault were not more his master's than his own. I know not where this evil is so likely to be prevented as at home —supposing always, nevertheless, (which is the case in your instance,) that the boy's parents and their acquaintance are persons of elegance and taste themselves. For, to converse with those who converse with propriety, and to be directed to such authors as have refined and improved the language by their productions, are advantages which he cannot elsewhere enjoy in an equal degree. And though it requires some time to regulate the taste and fix the judgment, and these effects must be gradually wrought even upon the best understanding, yet I suppose much less time will be necessary for the purpose than could at first be imagined, because the opportunities of improvement are continual.

A public education is often recommended as the most effectual remedy for that bashful and awkward restraint, so epidemical among the youth of our country. But I verily believe that, instead of being a cure, it is often the cause of it. For seven or eight years of his life, the boy has hardly seen or conversed with a man, or a woman, except the maids at his boarding-house. A gentleman, or a lady, are consequently such novelties to him that he is perfectly at a loss to know what sort of behavior he should preserve before them. He plays with his buttons or the strings of his hat; he blows his nose, and hangs down his head, is conscious of his own deficiency to a degree that makes him quite unhappy, and trembles lest any one should speak to him, because that would quite overwhelm him. Is not all this miserable shyness the effect of his education? To me it appears to be so. If he saw good company every day, he would never be terrified at the sight of it, and a room full of ladies and gentlemen would alarm him no more than the chairs they sit on. Such is the effect of custom.

I need add nothing further on this subject, because I believe little John is as likely to be exempted from this weakness as most young gentlemen we shall meet with. He seems to have his father's spirit in this respect, in whom I could never discern the least trace of bashfulness, though I have often heard him complain of it. Under your management and the influence of your example, I think he can hardly fail to escape it. If he does, he escapes that which has made many a man uncomfortable for life, and ruined not a few, by forcing them into mean and dishonorable company, where only they could be free and cheerful.

Connexions formed at school are said to be lasting and often beneficial. There are two or three stories of this kind upon record, which would not be so constantly cited as they are, whenever this subject happens to be mentioned, if the chronicle that preserves their remembrance had many besides to boast of. For my own part, I found such friendships, though warm enough in their commencement, surprisingly liable to extinction; and of seven or eight, whom I had selected for intimates, out of about three hundred, in ten years' time not one was left me. The truth is, that there may be, and often is, an attachment of one boy to another that looks very like a friendship, and, while they are in circumstances that enable them mutually to oblige and to assist each other, promises well and bids fair to be lasting. But they are no sooner separated from each other, by entering into the world at large, than other connexions and new employments, in which they no longer share together, efface the remembrance of what passed in earlier days, and they become strangers to each other forever. Add to this, the *man* frequently differs so much from the *boy;* his principles, manners, temper, and conduct, undergo so great an alteration, that we no longer recognize in him our old playfellow, but find him utterly unworthy, and unfit for the place he once held in our affections.

To close this article, as I did the last, by applying myself immediately to the present concern—little John is happily placed above all occasion for dependence on all such precarious hopes, and need not be sent to school in quest of some great men in embryo, who may possibly make his fortune.

Yours, my dear friend. W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

Olney, Oct. 5, 1780.

Dear Madam,—When a lady speaks, it is not civil to make her wait a week for an answer. I received your letter within this hour, and, foreseeing that the garden will engross much of my time for some days to come, have seized the present opportunity to acknowledge it. I congratulate you on Mr. Newton's safe arrival at Ramsgate, making no doubt but that he reached that place without difficulty or danger, the road thither from Canterbury being so good as to afford room for neither. He has now a view of the element with which he was once familiar, but which, I think, he has not seen for many years. The sight of his old acquaintance will revive in his mind a pleasing recollection of past deliverances, and when he looks at him from the beach, he may say—"You have formerly given me trouble enough, but I have cast anchor now where your billows can never reach me."—It is happy for him that he can say so.

Mrs. Unwin returns you many thanks for your anxiety on her account. Her health is considerably mended upon the whole, so as to afford us a hope that it will be established.

Our love attends you.

Yours, dear madam,
W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 9, 1780.

I wrote the following last summer. The tragical occasion of it really happened at the next house to ours. I am glad when I can find a subject to work upon; a lapidary, I suppose, accounts it a laborious part of his business to rub away the roughness of the stone; but it is my amusement, and if, after all the polishing I can give it, it discovers some little lustre, I think myself well rewarded for my pains.*

I shall charge you a halfpenny a-piece for every copy I send you, the short as well as the long. This is a sort of afterclap you little expected, but I cannot possibly afford them at a cheaper rate. If this method of raising money had occurred to me sooner, I should have made the bargain sooner; but am glad I have hit upon it at last. It will be a considerable encouragement to my Muse, and act as a powerful stimulus to my industry. If the American war should last much longer, I may be obliged to raise my price; but this I shall not do without a real occasion for it—it depends much upon Lord North's conduct in the article of supplies—if he imposes an additional tax on anything that I deal in, the necessity of this measure on my part will be so apparent that I dare say you will not dispute it. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Olney, Dec. 10, 1780.

My dear Friend,—I am sorry that the bookseller shuffles off the trouble of package upon anybody that belongs to you. I think I could cast him upon this point in an action upon the case, grounded upon the terms of his own undertaking. He engages to serve country customers. Ergo, as it would be unreasonable to expect that, when a country gentleman wants a book, he should order his chaise, and bid the man drive to Exeter Change; and as it is not probable that the book would find the way to him of itself, though it were the wisest that ever was written, I should suppose the law would compel him. For I recollect it is a maxim of good authority in the courts, that there is no right without a remedy. And if another, or third person, should not be suffered to interpose between my right and the remedy the law gives me, where the right is invaded, much less, I apprehend, shall the man himself, who of his own mere motion gives me that right, be suffered to do it.

I never made so long an argument upon a law case before. I ask your pardon for doing it now. You have but little need of such entertainment.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 21, 1780.

I thank you for your anecdote of Judge Carpenter. If it really happened, it is one of the best stories I ever heard; and if not, it has at least the merit of being *ben trovato*. We both very sincerely laughed at it, and think the whole Livery of London must have done the same; though I have known some persons, whose faces, as if they had been cast in a mould, could never be provoked to the least alteration of a single feature; so that you might as well relate a good story to a barber's block.

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

Your sentiments with respect to me are exactly Mrs. Unwin's. She, like you, is perfectly sure of my deliverance, and often tells me so. I make but one answer, and sometimes none at all. That answer gives *her* no pleasure, and would give *you* as little; therefore at this time I suppress it. It is better, on every account, that they who interest themselves so deeply in that event should believe the certainty of it, than that they should not. It is a comfort to *them* at least, if it is none to me; and as I could not if I would, so neither would I if I could, deprive them of it.

I annex a long thought in verse for your perusal. It was produced about last midsummer, but I never could prevail with myself, till now, to transcribe it.† You have bestowed some commendations on a certain poem now in the press, and they, I suppose, have at least animated me to the task. If human nature may be compared to a piece of tapestry, (and why not?) then human nature, as it subsists in me, though it is sadly faded on the right side, retains all its color on the wrong. I am pleased with commendation, and though not passionately desirous of indiscriminate praise, or what is generally called popularity, yet when a judicious friend claps me on the back, I own I find it an encouragement. At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind

* Verses on a Goldfinch, starved to death in a cage.
† Private correspondence.

* Private correspondence.
† The Verses alluded to appear to have been separated from the letter.

like mine to divert it from sad subjects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget everything that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipped again.

It will not be long, perhaps, before you will receive a poem called "The Progress of Error." That will be succeeded by another, in due time, called "Truth." Don't be alarmed, I ride Pegasus with a curb. He will never run away with me again. I have even convinced Mrs. Unwin that I can manage him, and make him stop when I please.

Yours, W. C.

The following letter, to Mr. Hill, contains a poem already printed in the works of Cowper; but the reader will be probably gratified in finding the sportiveness of Cowper's wit presented to him, as it was originally despatched by the author for the amusement of a friend.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Dec. 25, 1780.

My dear Friend,—Weary with rather a long walk in the snow, I am not likely to write a very sprightly letter, or to produce anything that may cheer this gloomy season, unless I have recourse to my pocket-book, where, perhaps, I may find something to transcribe; something that was written before the sun had taken leave of our hemisphere, and when I was less fatigued than I am at present.

Happy is the man who knows just so much of the law as to make himself a little merry now and then with the solemnity of juridical proceedings. I have heard of common law judgments before now; indeed have been present at the delivery of some, that, according to my poor apprehension, while they paid the utmost respect to the letter of the statute, have departed widely from the spirit of it, and, being governed entirely by the point of law, have left equity, reason, and common sense behind them, at an infinite distance. You will judge whether the following report of a case, drawn up by myself, be not a proof and illustration of this satirical assertion.

Nose, Plaintiff.—Eyes, *Defendants.*

Between Nose and Eyes a sad contest arose;
The Spectacles set them unhappily wrong:
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said Spectacles ought to belong.

So the Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause,
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning,
While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So fam'd for his talents at nicely discerning.

"In behalf of the Nose, it will quickly appear,
And your lordship," he said, "will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had Spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind."

Then holding the Spectacles up to the court,
"Your lordship observes, they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the nose is, in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

"Again, would your lordship a moment suppose,
('Tis a case that has happened, and may be again,)
That the visage, or countenance, had not a nose
Pray who would, or who could, wear Spectacles then?

"On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the Spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them."

Then shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes:
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed, with a grave, solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but,
"That whenever the Nose put his Spectacles on—
By day-light, or candle-light—Eyes should be shut!"

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Dec., 1780.

My dear Friend,—Poetical reports of law-cases are not very common, yet it seems to me desirable that they should be so. Many advantages would accrue from such a measure. They would, in the first place, be more commonly deposited in the memory, just as linen, grocery, or other such matters, when neatly packed, are known to occupy less room, and to lie more conveniently in any trunk, chest, or box, to which they may be committed. In the next place, being divested of that infinite circumlocution, and the endless embarrassment in which they are involved by it, they would become surprisingly intelligible, in comparison with their present obscurity. And, lastly, they would by this means be rendered susceptible of musical embellishment; and, instead of being quoted in the country, with that dull monotony which is so wearisome to by-standers, and frequently lulls even the judges themselves to sleep, might be rehearsed in recitation; which

would have an admirable effect, in keeping the attention fixed and lively, and could not fail to disperse that heavy atmosphere of sadness and gravity, which hangs over the jurisprudence of our country. I remember, many years ago, being informed by a relation of mine, who, in his youth, had applied himself to the study of the law, that one of his fellow-students, a gentleman of sprightly parts, and very respectable talents of the poetical kind, did actually engage in the prosecution of such a design; for reasons, I suppose, somewhat similar to, if not the same, with those I have now suggested. He began with Coke's Institutes; a book so rugged in its style, that an attempt to polish it seemed an Herculean labor, and not less arduous and difficult than it would be to give the smoothness of a rabbit's fur to the prickly back of a hedgehog. But he succeeded to admiration, as you will perceive by the following specimen, which is all that my said relation could recollect of the performance.

Tenant in fee
Simple is he,
And need neither quake nor quiver,
Who hath his lands
Free from demands,
To him and his heirs forever.

You have an ear for music, and a taste for verse, which saves me the trouble of pointing out, with a critical nicety, the advantages of such a version. I proceed, therefore, to what I at first intended, and to transcribe the record of an adjudged case thus managed, to which, indeed, what I premised was intended merely as an introduction.* W. C.

The following year commences by a letter to his friend Mr. Newton, and alludes to his two poems entitled "The Progress of Error," and "Truth."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Jan. 21, 1781.

My dear Sir,—I am glad that the "Progress of Error" did not err in its progress, as I feared it had, and that it has reached you safe; and still more pleased that it has met with your approbation; for, if it had not, I should have wished it had miscarried, and have been sorry that the bearer's memory had served him so well upon the occasion. I knew him to be that sort of genius, which, being much busied in making excursions of the imaginary kind, is not always present to its own immediate concerns, much less to those of others; and, having reposed the trust in him, began to regret that I had done so when it was too late. But I did it to save a frank, and as the affair has turned out, that end was very well answered. This is committed to the hands of a less volatile person, and therefore more to be depended on.

As to the poem called "Truth," which is already longer than its elder brother, and is yet to be lengthened by the addition of perhaps twenty lines, perhaps more, I shrink from the thought of transcribing it at present. But as there is no need to be in any hurry about it, I hope that, in some rainy season, which the next month will probably bring with it, when perhaps I may be glad of employment, the undertaking will appear less formidable.

You need not withhold from us any intelligence relating to yourselves, upon an apprehension that Mr. R—— has been beforehand with you upon those subjects, for we could get nothing out of him. I have known such travellers in my time, and Mrs. Newton is no stranger to one of them, who keep all their observations and discoveries to themselves, till they are extorted from them by mere dint of examination and cross-examination. He told us, indeed, that some invisible agent supplied you every Sunday with a coach, which we were pleased with hearing; and this, I think, was the sum total of his information.

We are much concerned for Mr. Barham's loss;* but it is well for that gentleman, that those amiable features in his character, which most incline one to sympathize with him, are the very graces and virtues that will strengthen him to bear it with equanimity and patience. People that have neither his light nor experience will wonder that a disaster, which would perhaps have broken their hearts, is not heavy enough to make any abatement in the cheerfulness of his.

Your books came yesterday. I shall not repeat to you what I said to Mrs. Unwin, after having read two or three of the letters. I admire the preface, in which you have given an air of novelty to a worn-out topic, and have actually engaged the favor of the reader by saying those things in a delicate and uncommon way, which in general are disgusting.

I suppose you know that Mr. Scott† will be in town on Tuesday. He is likely to

* This letter concluded with the poetical law-case of Nose, plaintiff—Eyes, defendants, already inserted.

† Private correspondence.

* The loss of his excellent wife. Mr. Barham was the intimate friend of Newton, and Cowper, and of the pious Lord Dartmouth, whose name is occasionally introduced in these letters in connexion with Olney, where his lordship's charity was liberally dispensed. Mr. Barham suggested the subject of many of the hymns that are inserted in the Olney collection, and particularly the one entitled "What think ye of Christ?" He was father of the late Jos. Foster Barham, Esq., many years M.P. for the borough of Stockbridge. The editor is happy in here bearing testimony to the profound piety and endearing virtues of a man, with whose family he became subsequently connected. He afterwards married the widow of Sir Rowland Hill, Bart., and lived at Hawkestone in Shropshire.

† The late Rev. Thomas Scott, so well known and distinguished by his writings.

take possession of the vicarage at last, with the best grace possible; at least, if he and Mr. Browne can agree upon the terms.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, Feb. 6, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Much good may your humanity do you, as it does so much good to others.† You can nowhere find objects more entitled to your pity than where your pity seeks them. A man whose vices and irregularities have brought his liberty and life into danger will always be viewed with an eye of compassion by those who understand what human nature is made of. And, while we acknowledge the severity of the law to be founded upon principles of necessity and justice, and are glad that there is such a barrier provided for the peace of society, if we consider that the difference between ourselves and the culprit is not of our own making, we shall be, as you are, tenderly affected with the view of his misery, and not the less so because he has brought it upon himself. I look upon the worst man in Chelmsford gaol with a more favorable eye than upon ——, who claims a servant's wages from one who never was his master.

I give you joy of your own hair. No doubt you are a considerable gainer in your appearance by being disperiwigged. The best wig is that which most resembles the natural hair; why then should he that has hair enough of his own have recourse to imitation? I have little doubt but that, if an arm or a leg could have been taken off with as little pain as attends the amputation of a curl or a lock of hair, the natural limb would have been thought less becoming or less convenient by some men than a wooden one, and been disposed of accordingly.

Yours ever, W C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Feb. 8, 1781.

My dear Friend,—It is possible that Mrs. Hill may not be herself a sufferer by the late terrible catastrophe in the Islands; but I should suppose, by her correspondence with those parts, she may be connected with some that are. In either case, I condole with her: for it is reasonable to imagine that, since the first tour that Columbus made into the Western world, it never before experienced such a convulsion, perhaps never since the foundation of the globe.‡ You say the state grows old, and discovers many symptoms of decline. A writer possessed of a genius for hypothesis, like that of Burnet, might construct a plausible argument to prove that the world itself is in a state of superannuation, if there be such a word. If not, there must be such a one as superannuity. When that just equilibrium that has hitherto supported all things seems to fail, when the elements burst the chain that had bound them, the wind sweeping away the works of man, and man himself together with his works, and the ocean seeming to overleap the command, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," these irregular and prodigious vagaries seemed to bespeak a decay, and forebode, perhaps, not a very distant dissolution. This thought has so run away with my attention, that I have left myself no room for the little politics that have only Great Britain for their object. Who knows but that while a thousand and ten thousand tongues are employed in adjusting the scale of our national concerns, in complaining of new taxes, and funds loaded with a debt of accumulating millions, the consummation of all things may discharge it in a moment, and the scene of all this bustle disappear, as if it had never been? Charles Fox would say, perhaps, he thought it very unlikely. I question if he could prove even that. I am sure, however, he could not prove it to be impossible.

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Feb. 15, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I am glad you were pleased with my report of so extraordinary a case.* If the thought of versifying the decisions of our courts of justice had struck me while I had the honor to attend them, it would perhaps have been no difficult matter to have compiled a volume of such amusing and interesting precedents: which, if they wanted the eloquence of the Greek or Roman oratory, would have amply compensated that deficiency by the harmony of rhyme and metre.

Your account of my uncle and your mother gave me great pleasure. I have long been afraid to inquire after some in whose welfare I always feel myself interested, lest the question should produce a painful answer. Longevity is the lot of so few, and is so seldom rendered comfortable by the associations of good health and good spirits, that I could not very reasonably suppose either your relations or mine so happy in those respects as it seems they are. May they continue to enjoy those blessings so long as the

* Private correspondence.

† This alludes to his attendance on a condemned malefactor in the jail at Chelmsford.

‡ This season was remarkable for the most destructive hurricanes ever remembered in the West Indies.

* He alludes to the humorous verses on the Nose and the Eyes, inserted in a preceding letter.

date of life shall last. I do not think that in these costermonger days, as I have a notion Falstaff calls them, an antediluvian age is at all a desirable thing, but to live comfortably while we do live is a great matter, and comprehends in it everything that can be wished for on this side the curtain that hangs between Time and Eternity!

Farewell, my better friend than any I have to boast of, either among the Lords or gentlemen of the House of Commons.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Feb. 18, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I send you "Table Talk." It is a medley of many things, some that may be useful, and some that, for aught I know, may be very diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me to drop a word in favor of religion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there a bit of sweatmeat, which seems to entitle it justly to the name of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I do not choose to be more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my readers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more serious than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs. A poet in my circumstances has a difficult part to act: one minute obliged to bridle his humor, if he has any; and the next, to clap a spur to the sides of it: now ready to weep from a sense of the importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained to laugh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dulness. If this be not violent exercise for the mind, I know not what is; and if any man doubt it, let him try. Whether all this management and contrivance be necessary I do not know, but am inclined to suspect that if my Muse was to go forth clad in Quaker color, without one bit of riband to enliven her appearance, she might walk from one end of London to the other as little noticed as if she were one of the sisterhood indeed.

You had been married thirty-one years last Monday. When you married I was eighteen years of age, and had just left Westminster school. At that time, I valued a man according to his proficiency and taste in classical literature, and had the meanest opinion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that. I lived to see the vanity of what I had made my pride, and in a few years found that there were other attainments which would carry a man more handsomely through life than a mere knowledge of what Homer and Virgil had left behind them. In measure as my attachment to these gentry wore off, I found a more welcome reception among those whose acquaintance it was more my interest to cultivate. But all this time was spent in painting a piece of wood that had no life in it. At last I began to think *indeed;* I found myself in possession of many baubles, but not one grain of solidity in all my treasures. Then I learned the truth, and then I lost it, and there ends my history. I would no more than you wish to live such a life over again, but for one reason. He that is carried to execution, though through the roughest road, when he arrives at the destined spot would be glad, notwithstanding the many jolts he met with, to repeat his journey.

Yours, my dear Sir, with our joint love,

W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO MRS. HILL.*

Olney, Feb. 19, 1781.

Dear Madam,—When a man, especially a man that lives altogether in the country, undertakes to write to a lady he never saw, he is the awkwardest creature in the world. He begins his letter under the same sensations he would have if he was to accost her in person, only with this difference,—that he may take as much time as he pleases for consideration, and need not write a single word that he has not well weighed and pondered beforehand, much less a sentence that he does not think supereminently clever. In every other respect, whether he be engaged in an interview or in a letter, his behavior is, for the most part, equally constrained and unnatural. He resolves, as they say, to set the best leg foremost, which often proves to be what Hudibras calls—

> Not that of bone,
> But much its better—th' wooden one.

His extraordinary effort only serves, as in the case of that hero, to throw him on the other side of his horse; and he owes his want of success, if not to absolute stupidity, to his most earnest endeavor to secure it.

Now I do assure you, madam, that all these sprightly effusions of mine stand entirely clear of the charge of premeditation, and that I never entered upon a business of this kind with more simplicity in my life. I determined, before I began, to lay aside all attempts of the kind I have just mentioned; and, being perfectly free from the fetters that self-conceit, commonly called bashfulness, fastens upon the mind, am, as you see, surprisingly brilliant.

My principal design is to thank you in the plainest terms, which always afford the best

* Private correspondence.

proof of a man's sincerity, for your obliging present. The seeds will make a figure hereafter in the stove of a much greater man than myself, who am a little man, with no stove at all. Some of them, however, I shall raise for my own amusement, and keep them as long as they can be kept in a bark heat, which I give them all the year; and, in exchange for those I part with, I shall receive such exotics as are not too delicate for a greenhouse.

I will not omit to tell you, what no doubt you have heard already, though perhaps you have never made the experiment, that leaves gathered at the fall are found to hold their heat much longer than bark, and are preferable in every respect. Next year, I intend to use them myself. I mention it, because Mr. Hill told me some time since, that he was building a stove, in which I suppose they will succeed much better than in a frame.

I beg to thank you again, madam, for the very fine salmon you were so kind as to favor me with, which has all the sweetness of a Hertfordshire trout, and resembles it so much in flavor, that blindfold I should not have known the difference.

I beg, madam, you will accept all these thanks, and believe them as sincere as they really are. Mr. Hill knows me well enough to be able to vouch for me that I am not over-much addicted to compliments and fine speeches; nor do I mean either the one or the other, when I assure you that I am, dear madam, not merely for his sake, but your own,

Your most obedient
and affectionate servant,
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Feb. 25, 1781.

My dear Friend,—He that tells a long story should take care that it be not made a long story by his manner of telling it. His expression should be natural, and his method clear; the incidents should be interrupted by very few reflections, and parentheses should be entirely discarded. I do not know that poor Mr. Teedon guides himself in the affair of story-telling by any one of these rules, or by any rule indeed that I ever heard of. He has just left us after a long visit, the greatest part of which he spent in the narration of a certain detail of facts that might have been compressed into a much smaller compass, and my attention to which has wearied and worn out all my spirits. You know how scrupulously nice he is in the choice of his expression; an exactness that soon becomes very inconvenient both to speaker and hearer, where there is not a great variety to choose out of. But Saturday evening is come, the time I generally devote to my correspondence with you; and Mrs. Unwin will not allow me to let it pass without writing, though, having done it herself, both she and you might well spare me upon the present occasion.

. . . . . .

Notwithstanding my purpose to shake hands with the Muse, and take my leave of her for the present, we have already had a *tete-a-tete* since I sent you the last production. I am as much or rather more pleased with my new plan than with any of the foregoing. I mean to give a short summary of the Jewish story, the miraculous interpositions in behalf of that people, their great privileges, their abuse of them, and their consequent destruction; and then, by way of comparison, such another display of the favors vouchsafed to this country, the similar ingratitude with which they have requited them, and the punishment they have therefore reason to expect, unless reformation interpose to prevent it. "Expostulation" is its present title; but I have not yet found in the writing it that facility and readiness without which I shall despair to finish it well, or indeed to finish it at all.

Believe me, my dear sir, with love to Mrs. N.,
Your ever affectionate,
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, March 5, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Since writing is become one of my principal amusements, and I have already produced so many verses on subjects that entitle them to a hope that they may possibly be useful, I should be sorry to suppress them entirely, or to publish them to no purpose, for want of that cheap ingredient, the name of the author. If my name therefore will serve them in any degree as a passport into the public notice, they are welcome to it; and Mr. Johnson will, if he pleases, announce me to the world by the style and title of

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.
OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

If you are of my mind, I think "Table Talk" will be the best to begin with, as the subjects of it are perhaps more popular; and one would wish, at first setting out, to catch the public by the ear, and hold them by it as fast as possible, that they may be willing to hear one on a second and a third occasion.

The passage you object to I inserted merely by way of catch, and think that it is not unlikely to answer the purpose. My design was to say as many serious things as I could, and yet to be as lively as was compatible with such a purpose. Do not imagine that I mean to stickle for it, as a pretty creature of

* Private correspondence.

* Private correspondence.

my own that I am loath to part with; but I am apprehensive that, without the sprightliness of that passage to introduce it, the following paragraph would not show to advantage.—If the world had been filled with men like yourself, I should never have written it; but, thinking myself in a measure obliged to tickle if I meant to please, I therefore affected a jocularity I did not feel. As to the rest, wherever there is war there is misery and outrage: notwithstanding which it is not only lawful to wish, but even a duty to pray, for the success of one's country. And as to the neutralities, I really think the Russian virago an impertinent puss for meddling with us, and engaging half a score kittens of her acquaintance to scratch the poor old lion, who, if he has been insolent in his day, has probably acted no otherwise than they themselves would have acted in his circumstances, and with his power to embolden them.

I am glad that the myrtles reached you safe, but am persuaded from past experience that no management will keep them long alive in London, especially in the city. Our own English Trots, the natives of the country, are for the most part too delicate to thrive there, much more the nice Italian. To give them, however, the best chance they can have, the lady must keep them well watered, giving them a moderate quantity in summer time every other day, and in winter about twice a week; not spring-water, for that would kill them. At Michaelmas, as much of the mould as can be taken out without disturbing the roots must be evacuated, and its place supplied with fresh, the lighter the better. And once in two years the plants must be drawn out of their pots, with the entire ball of earth about them, and the matted roots pared off with a sharp knife, when they must be planted again with an addition of rich light earth as before. Thus dealt with, they will grow luxuriantly in a greenhouse, where they can have plenty of sweet air, which is absolutely necessary to their health. I used to purchase them at Covent Garden almost every year when I lived in the Temple: but even in that airy situation they were sure to lose their leaf in winter, and seldom recovered it again in spring. I wish them a better fate at Hoxton.

Olney has seen this day what it never saw before, and what will serve it to talk of, I suppose, for years to come. At eleven o'clock this morning, a party of soldiers entered the town, driving before them another party, who, after obstinately defending the bridge for some time, were obliged to quit it and run. They ran in very good order, frequently faced about and fired, but were at last obliged to surrender prisoners of war. There has been much drumming and shouting, much scampering about in the dirt, but not an inch of lace made in the town, at least at the Silver End of it.

It is our joint request that you will not again leave us unwritten to for a fortnight. We are so like yourselves in this particular, that we cannot help ascribing so long a silence to the worst cause. The longer your letters the better, but a short one is better than none.

Mrs. Unwin is pretty well, and adds the greetings of her love to mine.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, March 18, 1781.

My dear Friend,—A slight disorder in my eye may possibly prevent my writing you a long letter, and would perhaps have prevented my writing at all, if I had not known that you account a fortnight's silence a week too long.

I am sorry that I gave you the trouble to write twice upon so trivial a subject as the passage in question. I did not understand by your first objections to it that you thought it so exceptionable as you do; but, being better informed, I immediately resolved to expunge it, and subjoin a few lines which you will oblige me by substituting in its place. I am not very fond of weaving a political thread into any of my pieces, and that for two reasons; first, because I do not think myself qualified, in point of intelligence, to form a decided opinion on any such topics; and, secondly, because I think them, though perhaps as popular as any, the most useless of all. The following verses are designed to succeed immediately after

—— fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward *his* mem'ry, dear to every muse, &c.†

I am obliged to you for your advice with respect to the manner of publication, and feel myself inclined to be determined by it. So far as I have proceeded on the subject of "Expostulation," I have written with tolerable ease to myself, and in my own opinion (for an opinion I am obliged to have about what I write, whether I will or no), with more emphasis and energy than in either of the others. But it seems to open upon me with an abundance of matter that forebodes a considerable length: and the time of year is come when, what with walking and gardening, I can find but little leisure for the pen. I mean however, as soon as I have engrafted a new scion into the "Progress of Error" instead of * * * *, and when I have tran-

* Private correspondence.

† Vide Poems, where, in the next line, the epithet *unshaken* is substituted for *the noblest*, in the letter.

scribed "Truth," and sent it to you, to apply myself to the composition last undertaken with as much industry as I can. If, therefore, the first three are put into the press while I am spinning and weaving the last, the whole may perhaps be ready for publication before the proper season will be past. I mean at present that a few select smaller pieces, about seven or eight perhaps, the best I can find in a bookful that I have by me, shall accompany them. All together they will furnish, I should imagine, a volume of tolerable bulk, that need not be indebted to an unreasonable breadth of margin for the importance of its figure.

If a board of inquiry were to be established, at which poets were to undergo an examination respecting the motives that induced them to publish, and I were to be summoned to attend, that I might give an account of mine, I think I could truly say, what perhaps few poets could, that, though I have no objection to lucrative consequences, if any such should follow, they are not my aim: much less is it my ambition to exhibit myself to the world as a genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your motive? I answer with a bow—amusement. There is nothing but this—no occupation within the compass of my small sphere, poetry excepted, that can do much towards diverting that train of melancholy thoughts, which, when I am not thus employed, are forever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success to make an amusement of it.

In my account of the battle fought at Olney, I laid a snare for your curiosity and succeeded. I supposed it would have an enigmatical appearance, and so it had; but like most other riddles, when it comes to be solved, you will find that it was not worth the trouble of conjecture. There are soldiers quartered at Newport and at Olney. These met, by order of their respective officers, in Emberton Marsh, performed all the manœuvres of a deedy battle, and the result was that this town was taken. Since I wrote, they have again encountered with the same intention; and Mr. R—— kept a room for me and Mrs. Unwin, that we might sit and view them at our ease. We did so, but it did not answer our expectation; for, before the contest could be decided, the powder on both sides being expended, the combatants were obliged to leave it an undecided contest. If it were possible that, when two great armies spend the night in expectation of a battle, a third could silently steal away their ammunition and arms of every kind, what a comedy would it make of that which always has such a tragical conclusion!

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, April 2, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Fine weather, and a variety of *extra-forancous* occupations, (search Johnson's dictionary for that word, and if not found there, insert it—for it saves a deal of circumlocution, and is very lawfully compounded,) make it difficult, (excuse the length of a parenthesis, which I did not foresee the length of when I began it, and which may perhaps a little perplex the sense of what I am writing, though, as I seldom deal in that figure of speech, I have the less need to make an apology for doing it at present,) make it difficult (I say) for me to find opportunities for writing. My morning is engrossed by the garden; and in the afternoon, till I have drunk tea, I am fit for nothing. At five o'clock we walk, and when the walk is over lassitude recommends rest, and again I become fit for nothing. The current hour, therefore, which (I need not tell you) is comprised in the interval between four and five, is devoted to your service, as the only one in the twenty-four which is not otherwise engaged.

I do not wonder that you have felt a great deal upon the occasion you mention in your last, especially on account of the asperity you have met with in the behavior of your friend. Reflect, however, that, as it is natural to you to have very fine feelings, it is equally natural to some other tempers to leave those feelings entirely out of the question, and to speak to you, and to act towards you, just as they do towards the rest of mankind, without the least attention to the irritability of your system. Men of a rough and unsparing address should take great care that they be always in the right, the justness and propriety of their sentiments and censures being the only tolerable apology that can be made for such a conduct, especially in a country where civility of behavior is inculcated even from the cradle. But, in the instance now under our contemplation, I think you a sufferer under the weight of an animadversion not founded in truth, and which, consequently, you did not deserve. I account him faithful in the pulpit who dissembles nothing that he believes for fear of giving offence. To accommodate a discourse to the judgment and opinion of others, for the sake of pleasing them, though by doing so we are obliged to depart widely from our own, is to be unfaithful to ourselves at least, and cannot be accounted fidelity to Him whom we profess to serve. But there are few men who do not stand in need of the exercise of charity and forbearance; and the gentleman in question has afforded you an ample opportunity in this respect to show how readily, though differing in your views, you can practise all that he could possibly expect from you, if

your persuasion corresponded exactly with his own.

With respect to *Monsieur le Curé*, I think you not quite excusable for suffering such a man to give you any uneasiness at all. The grossness and injustice of his demand ought to be its own antidote. If a robber should miscall you a pitiful fellow for not carrying a purse full of gold about you, would his brutality give you any concern? I suppose not. Why, then, have you been distressed in the present instance?

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, April 8, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Since I commenced author, my letters are even less worth your acceptance that they were before. I shall soon however, lay down the character, and cease to trouble you with directions to a printer, at least till the summer is over. If I live to see the return of winter, I may, perhaps, assume it again; but my appetite for fame is not keen enough to combat with my love of fine weather, my love of indolence, and my love of gardening employments.

I send you, by Mr. Old, my works complete, bound in brown paper, and numbered according to the series in which I would have them published. With respect to the poem called "Truth," it is *so* true, that it can hardly fail of giving offence to unenlightened readers. I think, therefore, that, in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody so well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it. Or, if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it would be still more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for a preface to the whole. I wish you, however, to consult your own judgment upon the occasion, and to engage in either of these works, or neither, just as your discretion guides you.

I have written a great deal to-day, which must be my excuse for an abrupt conclusion. Our love attends you both. We are in pretty good health; Mrs. Unwin, indeed, better than usual: and as to me, I ail nothing but the incurable ailment.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Thanks for the cocoa-nut.

I send you a cucumber, not of my own raising, and yet raised by me.

Solve this enigma, dark enough
To puzzle any brains
That are not downright puzzle-proof,
And eat it for your pains.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Monday, April 23, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Having not the least doubt of your ability to execute just such a preface as I should wish to see prefixed to my publication, and being convinced that you have no good foundation for those which you yourself entertain upon the subject, I neither withdraw my requisition nor abate one jot of the earnestness with which I made it. I admit the delicacy of the occasion, but am far from apprehending that you will therefore find it difficult to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke where another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in the appearance of my poems, and much pleased by the alacrity with which you do it. Your favorable opinion of them affords me a comfortable presage with respect to that of the public; for though I make allowances for your partiality to me and mine, because mine, yet I am sure you would not suffer me unadmonished to add myself to the multitude of insipid rhymers, with whose productions the world is already too much pestered.

It is worth while to send *you* a riddle, you make such a variety of guesses, and turn and tumble it about with such an industrious curiosity. The solution of that in question is —let me see; it requires some consideration to explain it, even though I made it. I raised the seed that produced the plant that produced the fruit that produced the seed that produced the fruit I sent you. This latter seed I gave to the gardener of Tyringham, who brought me the cucumber you mention. Thus you see I raised it—that is to say, I raised it virtually by having raised its progenitor; and yet I did not raise it, because the identical seed from which it grew was raised at a distance. You observe I did not speak rashly when I spoke of it as dark enough to pose an Œdipus, and have no need to call your own sagacity in question for falling short of the discovery.

A report has prevailed at Olney that you are coming in a fortnight; but, taking it for granted that you know best when you shall come, and that you will make us happy in the same knowledge as soon as you are possessed of it yourself, I did not venture to build any sanguine expectations upon it.

I have at last read the second volume of Mr. ——'s work, and had some hope that I should prevail with myself to read the first likewise. I began his book at the latter end, because the first part of it was engaged when I received the second; but I had not so good an appetite as the soldier of the Guards, who, I was informed when I lived in London, would for a small matter, eat up a cat alive,

* Private correspondence.

beginning at her tail and finishing with her whiskers.

Yours, *ut semper*, W. C.

The period was now arrived, in which Cowper was at length to make his appearance in the avowed character of an author. It is an epoch in British literature worthy of being recorded, because poetry in his hands became the handmaid of morality and religion. Too often has the Muse been prostituted to more ignoble ends. But it is to the praise of Cowper, that he never wrote a line at which modesty might blush. His verse is identified with whatever is pure in conception, chaste in imagery, and moral in its aim. His object was to strengthen, not to enervate; to impart health, not to administer to disease; and to inspire a love for virtue, by exhibiting the deformity of vice. So long as nature shall possess the power to charm, and the interests of solid truth and wisdom, arrayed in the garb of taste, and enforced by nervous language, shall deserve to predominate over seductive imagery, the page of Cowper will demand our admiration, and be read with delight and profit.

The following letters afford a very pleasing circumstantial account of the manner in which he was induced to venture into the world as a poet.

We will only add to the information they contain what we learn from the authority of his guardian friend, Mrs. Unwin, that she strongly solicited him, on his recovery from a very long fit of mental dejection, to devote his thoughts to poetry of considerable extent. She suggested to him, at the same time, the first subject of his verse, "The Progress of Error," which the reader will recollect as the second poem in his first volume. The time when that volume was completed, and the motives of its author for giving it to the world, are clearly displayed in an admirable letter to his poetical cousin, Mrs. Cowper. His feelings, on the approach of publication, are described with his usual nobleness of sentiment and simplicity of expression, in reply to a question upon the subject from the anxious young friend to whom he gave the first notice of his intention in the next letter.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 1, 1781.

Your mother says I *must* write, and *must* admits of no apology; I might otherwise plead, that I have nothing to say, that I am weary, that I am dull, that it would be more convenient therefore for you, as well as for myself, that I should let it alone. But all these pleas, and whatever pleas besides, either disinclination, indolence, or necessity might suggest are overruled, as they ought to be, the moment a lady addnces her irrefragable argument, *you must*. You have still however one comfort left, that what I must write, you may or may not read, just as it shall please you; unless Lady Anne at your elbow should say you must read it, and then, like a true knight, you will obey without looking for a remedy.

In the press, and speedily will be published, in one volume octavo, price three shillings, Poems, by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq. You may suppose, by the size of the publication, that the greatest part of them have been long kept secret, because you yourself have never seen them; but the truth is, that they were most of them, except what you have in your possession, the produce of the last winter. Two-thirds of the compilation will be occupied by four pieces, the first of which sprung up in the month of December, and the last of them in the month of March. They contain, I suppose, in all, about two thousand and five hundred lines; are known, or to be known in due time, by the names of *Table Talk—The Progress of Error—Truth —Expostulation*. Mr. Newton writes a preface, and Johnson is the publisher. The principal, I may say the only, reason why I never mentioned to you, till now, an affair which I am just going to make known to all the world (if *that* Mr. All-the-world should think it worth his knowing) has been this; that till within these few days, I had not the honor to know it myself. This may seem strange, but it is true, for, not knowing where to find underwriters who would choose to insure them, and not finding it convenient to a purse like mine to run any hazard, even upon the credit of my own ingenuity, I was very much in doubt for some weeks whether any bookseller would be willing to subject himself to an ambiguity, that might prove very expensive in case of a bad market. But Johnson has heroically set all peradventures at defiance, and takes the whole charge upon himself. So out I come. I shall be glad of my Translations from Vincent Bourne in your next frank. My Muse will lay herself at your feet immediately on her first public appearance.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, May 9, 1781.

My dear Sir,—I am in the press, and it is in vain to deny it. But how mysterious is the conveyance of intelligence from one end to the other of your great city! Not many days since, except one man, and he but little taller than yourself, all London was ignorant of it; for I do not suppose that the public prints have yet announced the most agreeable tidings; the title-page, which is the basis of the advertisement, having so lately reached

the publisher; and it is now known to you, who live at least two miles distant from my confidant upon the occasion.

My labors are principally the production of the last winter; all indeed, except a few of the minor pieces. When I can find no other occupation I think, and when I think I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass, that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland. In this respect, therefore, I and my contemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightful influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a brisk motion of the animal spirits, make poetry almost the language of nature; and I, when icicles depend from all the leaves of the Parnassian laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in verse as to hear a blackbird whistle. This must be my apology to you for whatever want of fire and animation you observe in what you will shortly have the perusal of. As to the public, if they like me not, there is no remedy. A friend will weigh and consider all disadvantages, and make as large allowances as an author can wish, and larger perhaps than he has any right to expect; but not so the world at large; whatever they do not like, they will not by any apology be persuaded to forgive, and it would be in vain to tell *them* that I wrote my verses in January, for they would immediately reply, "Why did not you write them in May?" A question that might puzzle a wiser head than we poets are generally blessed with. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 10, 1781.

My dear Friend,—It is Friday; I have just drunk tea, and just perused your letter; and though this answer to it cannot set off till Sunday, I obey the warm impulse I feel, which will not permit me to postpone the business till the regular time of writing.

I expected you would be grieved; if you had not been so, those sensibilities which attend you upon every other occasion must have left you upon this. I am sorry that I have given you pain, but not sorry that you have felt it. A concern of that sort would be absurd, because it would be to regret your friendship for me, and to be dissatisfied with the effect of it. Allow yourself however three minutes only for reflection, and your penetration must necessarily dive into the motives of my conduct. In the first place, and by way of preface, remember that I do not (whatever your partiality may incline you to do) account it of much consequence to any friend of mine whether he is, or is not, employed by me upon such an occasion. But all affected renunciations of poetical merit apart, and all unaffected expressions of the sense I have of my own littleness in the poetical character too, the obvious and only reason why I resorted to Mr. Newton, and not to my friend Unwin, was this: that the former lived at London, the latter at Stock; the former was upon the spot to correct the press, to give instructions respecting any sudden alterations, and to settle with the publisher everything that might possibly occur in the course of such a business; the latter could not be applied to for these purposes without what I thought would be a manifest encroachment on his kindness; because it might happen that the troublesome office might cost him now and then a journey, which it was absolutely impossible for me to endure the thought of.

When I wrote to you for the copies you have sent me, I told you I was making a collection, but not with a design to publish. There is nothing truer than at that time I had not the smallest expectation of sending a volume of Poems to the press. I had several small pieces that might amuse, but I would not, when I publish, make the amusement of the reader my only object. When the winter deprived me of other employments, I began to compose, and, seeing six or seven months before me which would naturally afford me much leisure for such a purpose, I undertook a piece of some length: that finished, another; and so on, till I had amassed the number of lines I mentioned in my last.

Believe of me what you please, but not that I am indifferent to you or your friendship for me on any occasion.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 23, 1781.

My dear Friend,—If a writer's friends have need of patience, how much more the writer! Your desire to see my Muse in public, and mine to gratify you, must both suffer the mortification of delay. I expected that my trumpeter would have informed the world, by this time, of all that is needful for them to know upon such an occasion; and that an advertising blast, blown through every newspaper, would have said—"The Poet is coming."—But man, especially man that writes verse, is born to disappointments, as surely as printers and booksellers are born to be the most dilatory and tedious of all creatures. The plain English of this magnificent preamble is, that the season of publication is just elapsed, that the town is going into the country every day, and that my book cannot appear till they return, that is to say, not till next winter. This misfortune, however, comes not without its attendant advantage; I shall now have, what I should not

otherwise have had, an opportunity to correct the press myself: no small advantage upon any occasion, but especially important where poetry is concerned! A single erratum may knock out the brains of a whole passage, and that, perhaps, which of all others the unfortunate poet is the most proud of. Add to this that, now and then, there is to be found in a printing-house a presumptuous intermeddler, who will fancy himself a poet too, and, what is still worse, a better than he that employs him. The consequence is that, with cobbling and tinkering, and patching on here and there a shred of his own, he makes such a difference between the original and the copy, that an author cannot know his own work again. Now, as I choose to be responsible for nobody's dulness but my own, I am a little comforted when I reflect that it will be in my power to prevent all such impertinence, and yet not without your assistance. It will be quite necessary that the correspondence between me and Johnson should be carried on without the expense of postage, because proof-sheets would make double or treble letters, which expense, as in every instance it must occur twice, first when the packet is sent and again when it is returned, would be rather inconvenient to me, who, as you perceive, am forced to live by my wits, and to him who hopes to get a little matter, no doubt, by the same means. Half a dozen franks, therefore, to me, and *totidem* to him will be singularly acceptible, if you can, without feeling it in any respect a trouble, procure them for me.*

I am much obliged to you for your offer to support me in a translation of Bourne. It is but seldom, however, and never except for my amusement, that I translate; because I find it disagreeable to work by another man's pattern; I should, at least, be sure to find it so in a business of any length. Again, *that* is epigrammatic and witty in Latin which would be perfectly insipid in English, and a translator of Bourne would frequently find himself obliged to supply what is called the turn, which is in fact the most difficult and the most expensive part of the whole composition, and could not, perhaps, in many instances, be done with any tolerable success. If a Latin poem is neat, elegant, and musical, it is enough—but English readers are not so easily satisfied. To quote myself, you will find, in comparing the jackdaw with the original, that I was obliged to sharpen a point, which, though smart enough in the Latin, would in English have appeared as plain and as blunt as the tag of a lace. I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius,* or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to *him*. I love him too, with a love of partiality, because he was usher of the fifth form at Westminster, when I passed through it. He was so good-natured, and so indolent, that I lost more than I got by him; for he made me as idle as himself. He was such a sloven, as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for everything that could disgust you in his person; and indeed in his writings he has almost made amends for all. His humor is entirely original—he can speak of a magpie or a cat in terms so exquisitely appropriate to the character he draws, that one would suppose him animated by the spirit of the creature he describes. And with all his drollery there is a mixture of rational and even religious reflection at times, and always an air of pleasantry, good-nature, and humanity, that makes him, in my mind, one of the most amiable writers in the world. It is not common to meet with an author, who can make you smile and yet at nobody's expense; who is always entertaining and yet always harmless; and who, though always elegant, and classical to a degree not always found in the classics themselves, charms more by the simplicity and playfulness of his ideas than by the neatness and purity of his verse; yet such was poor Vinny. I remember seeing the Duke of Richmond set fire to his greasy locks, and box his ears to put it out again.

Since I began to write long poems I seem to turn up my nose at the idea of a short one. I have lately entered upon one, which, if ever finished, cannot easily be comprised in much less than a thousand lines! But this must make part of a second publication, and be accompanied, in due time, by others not yet thought of; for it seems (what I did not know till the bookseller had occasion to tell me so) that single pieces stand no chance, and that nothing less than a volume will go down. You yourself afford me a proof of the certainty of this intelligence, by sending me franks which nothing less than a volume can fill. I have accordingly sent you one, but am obliged to add that, had the wind been in any other point of the compass, or, blowing as it does from the east, had it been less boisterous, you must have been contented with a much shorter letter, but the abridgment of every other occupation is very favorable to that of writing.

I am glad I did not expect to hear from

* The privilege of franking letters was formerly exercised in a very different manner from what is now in use. The name of the M.P. was inserted, as is usual, on the cover of the letter, but the address was left to be added when and where the writer of the letter found it most expedient.

* The classic beauty and felicity of expression in the Latin compositions of Bourne have been justly admired; but a doubt will exist in the mind of the classical reader, whether the praise which exalts his merits above those of a Tibullus, to whom both Ovid and Horace have borne so distinguished testimony, does not exceed the bounds of legitimate eulogy.

you by this post, for the boy has lost the bag in which your letter must have been enclosed—another reason for my prolixity!

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, May 28, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I am much obliged to you for the pains you have taken with my "Table Talk," and wish that my *viva voce* table-talk could repay you for the trouble you have had with the written one.

The season is wonderfully improved within this day or two; and if these cloudless skies are continued to us, or rather if the cold winds do not set in again, promises you a pleasant excursion, as far, at least, as the weather can conduce to make it such. You seldom complain of too much sunshine, and if you are prepared for a heat somewhat like that of Africa, the south walk in our long garden will exactly suit you. Reflected from the gravel and from the walls, and beating upon your head at the same time, it may possibly make you wish you could enjoy for an hour or two that immensity of shade afforded by the gigantic trees still growing in the land of your captivity.† If you could spend a day now and then in those forests, and return with a wish to England, it would be no small addition to the number of your best pleasures. But *pennæ non homini datæ*. The time will come, perhaps, (but death will come first,) when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise, surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy, arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with, and so far, at least, be reconciled to a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection.

Miss Catlett must not think of any other lodging than we can, without any inconvenience as we shall with all possible pleasure, furnish her with. We can each of us say—that is, I can say it in Latin, and Mrs. Unwin in English—*Nihil tui a me alienum puto.*

Having two more letters to write, I find myself obliged to shorten this; so once more wishing you a good journey, and ourselves the happiness of receiving you in good health and spirits,

I remain affectionately yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

† Mr. Newton's voyage to Africa, and his state of mind at that period, are feelingly described by himself in his own writings, as well as the great moral change which he subsequently experienced.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 28, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I believe I never gave you trouble without feeling more than I give. So much by way of preface and apology!

Thus stands the case—Johnson has begun to print, and Mr. Newton has already corrected the first sheet. This unexpected despatch makes it necessary for me to furnish myself with the means of communication, viz., the franks, as soon as may be. There are reasons (I believe I mentioned in my last) why I choose to revise the proof myself: nevertheless, if your delicacy must suffer the puncture of a pin's point in procuring the franks for me, I release you entirely from the task: you are as free as if I had never mentioned them. But you will oblige me by a speedy answer upon this subject, because it is expedient that the printer should know to whom he is to send his copy; and when the press is once set, those humble servants of the poets are rather impatient of any delay, because the types are wanted for other authors, who are equally impatient to be born.

This fine weather, I suppose, sets you on horseback, and allures the ladies into the garden. If I was at Stock, I should be of their party, and, while they sat knotting or netting in the shade, should comfort myself with the thought that I had not a beast under me whose walk would seem tedious, whose trot would jumble me, and whose gallop might throw me into a ditch. What nature expressly designed me for I have never been able to conjecture, I seem to myself so universally disqualified for the common and customary occupations and amusements of mankind. When I was a boy, I excelled at cricket and football, but the fame I acquired by achievements that way is long since forgotten, and I do not know that I have made a figure in anything since. I am sure, however, that she did not design me for a horseman, and that, if all men were of my mind, there would be an end of all jockeyship forever. I am rather straitened for time, and not very rich in materials; therefore, with our joint love to you all, conclude myself,

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jun. 5, 1781.

My dear Friend,—If the old adage be true, that "he gives twice who gives speedily," it is equally true that he who not only uses expedition in giving, but gives more than was asked, gives thrice at least. Such is the style in which Mr. —— confers a favor. He has not only sent me franks to Johnson, but, under another cover, has added six to you.

These last, for aught that appears by your letter, he threw in of his own mere bounty. I beg that my share of thanks may not be wanting on this occasion, and that, when you write to him next, you will assure him of the sense I have of the obligation, which is the more flattering, as it includes a proof of his predilection in favor of the poems his franks are destined to enclose. May they not forfeit his good opinion hereafter, nor yours, to whom I hold myself indebted in the first place, and who have equally given me credit for their deservings! Your mother says that, although there are passages in them containing opinions which will not be universally subscribed to, the world will at least allow what my great modesty will not permit me to subjoin. I have the highest opinion of her judgment, and know, by having experienced the soundness of them, that her observations are always worthy of attention and regard. Yet, strange as it may seem, I do not feel the vanity of an author, when she commends me; but I feel something better, a spur to my diligence, and a cordial to my spirits, both together animating me to deserve, at least not to fall short of, her expectations. For I verily believe, if my dulness should earn me the character of a dunce, the censure would affect her more than me; not that I am insensible of the value of a good name, either as a man or an author. Without an ambition to attain it, it is absolutely unattainable under either of those descriptions. But my life having been in many respects a series of mortifications and disappointments, I am become less apprehensive and impressible, perhaps, in some points, than I should otherwise have been; and, though I should be exquisitely sorry to disgrace my friends, could endure my own share of the affliction with a reasonable measure of tranquillity.

These seasonable showers have poured floods upon all the neighboring parishes, but have passed us by. My garden languishes, and, what is worse, the fields too languish, and the upland-grass is burnt. These discriminations are not fortuitous. But if they are providential, what do they import? I can only answer, as a friend of mine once answered a mathematical question in the schools—"*Prorsus nescio.*" Perhaps it is that men who will not believe what they cannot understand may learn the folly of their conduct, while their very senses are made to witness against them; and themselves, in the course of providence, become the subjects of a thousand dispensations they cannot explain. But the end is never answered. The lesson is inculcated, indeed, frequently enough, but nobody learns it. Well, Instruction, vouchsafed in vain, is (I suppose) a debt to be accounted for hereafter.

You must understand this to be a soliloquy. I wrote my thoughts without recollecting that I was writing a letter, and to you.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 24, 1781.

My dear Friend,—The letter you withheld so long, lest it should give me pain, gave me pleasure. Horace says, the poets are a waspish race; and, from my own experience of the temper of two or three with whom I was formerly connected, I can readily subscribe to the character he gives them. But, for my own part, I have never yet felt that excessive irritability, which some writers discover, when a friend, in the words of Pope,

"Just hints a fault, or hesitates dislike."

Least of all would I give way to such an unseasonable ebullition, merely because a civil question is proposed to me, with such gentleness, and by a man whose concern for my credit and character I verily believe to be sincere. I reply therefore, not peevishly, but with a sense of the kindness of your intentions, that I hope you may make yourself very easy on a subject, that I can perceive has occasioned you some solicitude. When I wrote the poem called "Truth," it was indispensably necessary that I should set forth that doctrine which I know to be true, and that I should pass what I understood to be a just censure upon opinions and persuasions that differ from or stand in direct opposition to it; because, though some errors may be innocent, and even religious errors are not always pernicious, yet, in a case where the faith and hope of a Christian are concerned, they must necessarily be destructive; and because, neglecting this, I should have betrayed my subject; either suppressing what in my judgment is of the last importance, or giving countenance by a timid silence to the very evils it was my design to combat. That you may understand me better, I will subjoin—that I wrote that poem on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver; consequently to set the brand of invalidity upon the plea of works, and to discover, upon scriptural ground, the absurdity of that notion, which includes a solecism in the very terms of it, that man by repent- of his Maker: I call it a solecism, because ance and good works may deserve the mercy mercy deserved ceases to be mercy, and must take the name of justice. This is the opinion which I said in my last the world would not acquiesce in, but except this I do not re-

collect that I have introduced a syllable into any of my pieces that they can possibly object to; and even this I have endeavored to deliver from doctrinal dryness, by as many pretty things in the way of trinket and plaything as I could muster upon the subject. So that, if I have rubbed their gums, I have taken care to do it with a coral, and even that coral embellished by the ribbon to which it is tied, and recommended by the tinkling of all the bells I could contrive to annex to it.

You need not trouble yourself to call on Johnson; being perfectly acquainted with the progress of the business, I am able to satisfy your curiosity myself—the post before the last, I returned to him the second sheet of "Table Talk," which he had sent me for correction, and which stands foremost in the volume. The delay has enabled me to add a piece of considerable length, which, but for the delay, would not have made its appearance upon this occasion: it answers to the name of Hope.

I remember a line in the Odyssey, which, literally translated, imports that there is nothing in the world more impudent than the belly. But, had Homer met with an instance of modesty like yours, he would either have suppressed that observation, or at least have qualified it with an exception. I hope that, for the future, Mrs. Unwin will never suffer you to go to London without putting some victuals in your pocket; for what a strange article would it make in a newspaper, that a tall, well-dressed gentleman, by his appearance a clergyman, and with a purse of gold in his pocket, was found starved to death in the street. How would it puzzle conjecture to account for such a phenomenon! some would suppose that you had been kidnapped, like Betty Canning, of hungry memory; others would say the gentleman was a Methodist, and had practised a rigorous self-denial, which had unhappily proved too hard for his constitution; but I will venture to say that nobody would divine the real cause, or suspect for a moment that your modesty had occasioned the tragedy in question. By the way, is it not possible that the spareness and slenderness of your person may be owing to the same cause? for surely it is reasonable to suspect that the bashfulness which could prevail against you on so trying an occasion may be equally prevalent on others. I remember having been told by Colman, that, when he once dined with Garrick, he repeatedly pressed him to eat more of a certain dish that he was known to be particularly fond of: Colman as often refused, and at last declared he could not, "But could not you," says Garrick, "if you was in a dark closet by yourself? The same question might perhaps be put to you, with as much or more propriety and therefore I recommend it to you, either to furnish yourself with a little more assurance or always to eat in the dark.

We sympathize with Mrs. Unwin, and, if it will be any comfort to her to know it, can assure her, that a lady in our neighborhood is always, on such occasions, the most miserable of all things, and yet escapes with great facility through all the dangers of her state.

Yours, *ut semper*, W. C.

Among the occurrences that deserve to be recorded in the life of Cowper, the commencement of his acquaintance with Lady Austen, from its connexion with his literary history, is entitled to distinct notice. This lady possessed a highly cultivated mind, and the power, in no ordinary degree, to engage and interest the attention. This acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, and it is to her that we are primarily indebted for the poem of "The Task," for the ballad of "John Gilpin," and for the translation of Homer. The occasion of this acquaintance was as follows.

A lady, whose name was Jones, was one of the few neighbors admitted in the residence of the retired poet. She was the wife of a clergyman, who resided at the village of Clifton, within a mile of Olney. Her sister the widow of Sir Robert Austen, Baronet, came to pass some time with her in the summer of 1781; and, as the two ladies entered a shop in Olney, opposite to the house of Mrs. Unwin, Cowper observed them from his window. Although naturally shy, and now rendered more so by his very long illness, he was so struck with the appearance of the stranger, that, on hearing she was sister to Mrs. Jones, he requested Mrs. Unwin to invite them to tea. So strong was his reluctance to admit the company of strangers, that, after he had occasioned this invitation, he was for a long time unwilling to join the little party; but, having forced himself at last to engage in conversation with Lady Austen, he was so delighted with her colloquial talents, that he attended the ladies on their return to Clifton; and from that time continued to cultivate the regard of his new acquaintance with such assiduous attention, that she soon received from him the familiar and endearing title of Sister Ann.

The great and happy influence which an incident that seems at first sight so trivial produced on the imagination of Cowper, will best appear from the following epistle, which, soon after Lady Austen's return to London for the winter, the poet addressed to her, on the 17th December, 1781.

Dear Anna,—between friend and friend,
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
T' express th' occurrence of the day;

Our health, the weather, and the news;
What walks we take, what books we choose;
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Deriv'd from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart!
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme,
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;
Who labor hard to allure, and draw,
The loiterers I never saw,
Should feel that itching and that tingling,
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When called to address myself to you.

Mysterious are his ways, whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is th' allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions;
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,
Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver End.*
Thus Martha, ev'n against her will,
Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,†
Are come from distant Loire, to choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just op'ning to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains
To guess and spell what it contains:
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us perhaps at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof that we and our affairs
Are part of a Jehovah's cares:
For God unfolds, by slow degrees,
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light,
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads at length before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate in vain.

Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, tho' luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud descry,
Or guess with a prophetic power,
The future splendor of the flower?
Just so, th' Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use;
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small perhaps the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
An harbinger of endless good.

Not that I deem or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small;
But merely to remark that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size,
That seemed to promise no such prize:
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation!)
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And plac'd it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken;
"A three-fold cord is not soon broken."

* An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.
† Lady Austen's residence in France.

In this interesting poem the author seems prophetically to anticipate the literary efforts that were to spring, in process of time, from a friendship so unexpected and so pleasing.

Genius of the most exquisite kind is sometimes, and perhaps generally, so modest and diffident as to require continual solicitation and encouragement from the voice of sympathy and friendship to lead it into permanent and successful exertion. Such was the genius of Cowper; and he, therefore considered the cheerful and animating society of his new and accomplished friend as a blessing conferred on him by the signal favor of Providence.

We shall find frequent allusions to this lady in the progress of the following correspondence.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, July 7, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Mr. Old brought us the acceptable news of your safe arrival. My sensations at your departure were far from pleasant, and Mrs. Unwin suffered more upon the occasion than when you first took leave of Olney. When we shall meet again, and in what circumstances, or whether we shall meet or not, is an article to be found no-

* Private correspondence.

where but in that volume of Providence which belongs to the current year, and will not be understood till it is accomplished. This I know, that your visit was most agreeable here. It was so even to me, who, though I live in the midst of many agreeables, am but little sensible of their charms. But, when you came, I determined, as much as possible, to be deaf to the suggestions of despair; that, if I could contribute but little to the pleasure of the opportunity, I might not dash it with unseasonable melancholy, and, like an instrument with a broken string, interrupt the harmony of the concert.

Lady Austen, waving all forms, has paid us the first visit; and, not content with showing us that proof of her respect, made handsome apologies for her intrusion. We returned the visit yesterday. She is a lively, agreeable woman; has seen much of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation without seeming to labor at it.

I had rather submit to chastisement now than be obliged to undergo it hereafter. If Johnson, therefore, will mark with a marginal Q, those lines that he or his object to as not sufficiently finished, I will willingly retouch them, or give a reason for my refusal. I shall moreover think myself obliged by any hints of that sort, as I do already to somebody, who, by running here and there two or three paragraphs into one, has very much improved the arrangement of my matter. I am apt, I know, to fritter it into too many pieces, and, by doing so, to disturb that order to which all writings must owe their perspicuity, at least in a considerable measure. With all that carefulness of revisal I have exercised upon the sheets as they have been transmitted to me, I have been guilty of an oversight, and have suffered a great fault to escape me, which I shall be glad to correct, if not too late.

In the "Progress of Error," a part of the Young Squire's apparatus, before he yet enters upon his travels, is said to be

——Memorandum-book to minute down
The several posts, and where the chaise broke down.

Here, the reviewers would say, is not only "down," but "down derry down" into the bargain, the word being made to rhyme to itself. This never occurred to me till last night, just as I was stepping into bed. I should be glad, however, to alter it thus—

With memorandum-book for every town,
And ev'ry inn, and where the chaise broke down.

I have advanced so far in "Charity," that I have ventured to give Johnson notice of it, and his option whether he will print it now or hereafter. I rather wish he may choose the present time, because it will be a proper sequel to "Hope," and because I am willing to think it will embellish the collection.

Whoever means to take my phiz will find himself sorely perplexed in seeking for a fit occasion. That I shall not give him one, is certain; and if he steals one, he must be as cunning and quicksighted a thief as Autolycus himself. His best course will be to draw a face, and call it mine, at a venture. They who have not seen me these twenty years will say, It may possibly be a striking likeness now, though it bears no resemblance to what he was: time makes great alterations. They who know me better will say, perhaps, Though it is not perfectly the thing, yet there is somewhat of the cast of his countenance. If the nose was a little longer, and the chin a little shorter, the eyes a little smaller, and the forehead a little more protuberant, it would be just the man. And thus, without seeing me at all, the artist may represent me to the public eye, with as much exactness as yours has bestowed upon you, though, I suppose, the original was full in his view when he made the attempt.

We are both as well as when you left us. Our hearty affections wait upon yourself and Mrs. Newton, not forgetting Euphrosyne, the laughing lady.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

The playfulness of Cowper's humor is amusingly exerted in the following letter:—

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 12, 1781.

My very dear Friend,—I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows whether what I have got be verse or not:—by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme, but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before?

I have writ Charity, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the Reviewer should say "to be sure the gentleman's Muse wears Methodist shoes, you may know by her pace and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoidening play, of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan to catch, if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction: she has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come with a sugar-plum."—His opinion in this will not be amiss: 'tis what I intend, my principal end, and, if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall

think I am paid for all I have said and all I have done, though I have run many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor laid upon springs, and such like things, with so much art in every part, that when you went in you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe, or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penn'd, which that you may do, ere Madam and you are quite worn out with jigging about, I take my leave, and here you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me— W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, July 22, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I am sensible of your difficulties in finding opportunities to write; and therefore, though always desirous and sometimes impatient to hear from you, am never peevish when I am disappointed.

Johnson, having begun to print, has given me some sort of security for his perseverance; else the tardiness of his operations would almost tempt me to despair of the end. He has, indeed, time enough before him; but that very circumstance is sometimes a snare, and gives occasion to delays that cannot be remedied. Witness the hare in the fable, who fell asleep in the midst of the race, and waked not till the tortoise had won the prize.

Taking it for granted that the new marriage-bill would pass, I took occasion, in the Address to Liberty, to celebrate the joyful era; but in doing so afforded another proof that poets are not always prophets, for the House of Lords have thrown it out. I am, however, provided with four lines to fill up the gap, which I suppose it will be time enough to insert when the copy is sent down. I am in the middle of an affair called "Conversation," which, as "Table Talk" serves in the present volumes by way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows, I design shall perform the same office in a second.

Sic brevi fortes jaculamur ævo.

You cannot always find time to write, and I cannot always write a great deal; not for want of time, but for want of something equally requisite; perhaps materials, perhaps spirits, or perhaps more frequently for want of ability to overcome an indolence that I have sometimes heard even you complain of.

Yours, my dear Sir, and Mrs. Newton's,
W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 29, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Having given the case you laid before me in your last all due consideration, I proceed to answer it; and, in order to clear my way, shall, in the first place, set down my sense of those passages in Scripture, which, on a hasty perusal, seem to clash with the opinions I am going to give—"If a man smite one cheek, turn the other"—"If he take thy cloak, let him take thy coat also." That is, I suppose, rather than on a vindictive principle avail yourself of that remedy the law allows you, in the way of retaliation, for that was the subject immediately under the discussion of the speaker. Nothing is so contrary to the genius of the gospel as the gratification of resentment and revenge; but I cannot easily persuade myself to think, that the Author of that dispensation could possibly advise his followers to consult their own peace at the expense of the peace of society, or inculcate a universal abstinence from the use of lawful remedies, to the encouragement of injury and oppression.

St. Paul again seems to condemn the practice of going to law—"Why do ye not rather suffer wrong," &c. But if we look again we shall find that a litigious temper had obtained, and was prevalent, among the professors of the day. This he condemned, and with good reason; it was unseemly to the last degree that the disciples of the Prince of Peace should worry and vex each other with injurious treatment and unnecessary disputes, to the scandal of their religion in the eyes of the heathen. But surely he did not mean, any more than his Master, in the place above alluded to, that the most harmless members of society should receive no advantage of its laws, or should be the only persons in the world who should derive no benefit from those institutions without which society cannot subsist. Neither of them could mean to throw down the pale of property, and to lay the Christian part of the world open, throughout all ages, to the incursions of unlimited violence and wrong.

By this time you are sufficiently aware that I think you have an indisputable right to recover at law what is so dishonestly withheld from you. The fellow, I suppose, has discernment enough to see a difference between you and the generality of the clergy, and cunning enough to conceive the purpose of turning your meekness and forbearance to

good account, and of coining them into hard cash, which he means to put in his pocket, But I would disappoint him, and show him that, though a Christian is not to be quarrelsome, he is not to be crushed; and that, though he is but a worm before God, he is not such a worm as every selfish and unprincipled wretch may tread upon at his pleasure.

I lately heard a story from a lady, who spent many years of her life in France, somewhat to the present purpose. An Abbé, universally esteemed for his piety, and especially for the meekness of his manners, had yet undesignedly giving some offence to a shabby fellow in his parish. The man concluding he might do as he pleased with so forgiving and gentle a character, struck him on one cheek, and bade him turn the other. The good man did so, and when he had received the two slaps, which he thought himself obliged to submit to, turned again, and beat him soundly. I do not wish to see you follow the French gentleman's example, but I believe nobody that has heard the story condemns him much for the spirit he showed upon the occasion.

I had the relation from Lady Austen, sister to Mrs. Jones, wife of the minister at Clifton. She is a most agreeable woman, and has fallen in love with your mother and me: insomuch, that I do not know but she may settle at Olney. Yesterday se'nnight we all dined together in the *Spinnie*—a most delightful retirement, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton of Weston. Lady Austen's lacquey, and a lad that waits on me in the garden, drove a wheelbarrow full of eatables and drinkables to the scene of our *fete-champetre*. A board laid over the top of the wheelbarrow, served us for a table: our dining-room was a root-house, lined with moss and ivy. At six o'clock, the servants, who had dined under the great elm upon the ground, at a little distance, boiled the kettle, and the said wheelbarrow served us for a tea-table. We then took a walk into the wilderness, about half a mile off, and were at home again a little after eight, having spent the day together from noon till evening, without one cross occurrence, or the least weariness of each other—a happiness few parties of pleasure can boast of.

Yours, with our joint love,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.*

Olney, August, 1781.

Dear Madam,—Though much obliged to you for the favor of your last, and ready enough to acknowledge the debt; the present however, is not a day in which I should have chosen to pay it. A dejection of mind, which perhaps may be removed by to-morrow, rather disqualifies me for writing,—a business I would always perform in good spirits, because melancholy is catching, especially where there is much sympathy to assist the contagion. But certain poultry, which I understand are about to pay their respects to you, have advertised for an agreeable companion, and I find myself obliged to embrace the opportunity of going to town with them in that capacity.

. . . . .

While the world lasts, fashion will continue to lead it by the nose. And, after all, what can fashion do for its most obsequious followers? It can ring the changes upon the same things, and it can do no more. Whether our hats be white or black, our caps high or low,—whether we wear two watches or one—is of little consequence. There is indeed an appearance of variety; but the folly and vanity that dictate and adopt the change are invariably the same. When the fashions of a particular period appear more reasonable than those of the preceding, it is not because the world is grown more reasonable than it was; but because in the course of perpetual changes, some of them must sometimes happen to be for the better. Neither do I suppose the preposterous customs that prevail at present a proof of its greater folly. In a few years, perhaps next year, the fine gentleman will shut up his umbrella, and give it to his sister, filling his hand with a crab-tree cudgel instead of it: and when he has done so, will he be wiser than now? By no means. The love of change will have betrayed him into a propriety, which, in reality, he has no taste for, all his merit on the occasion amounting to no more than this—that, being weary of one plaything, he has taken up another.

In a note I received from Johnson last week, he expresses a wish that my pen may be still employed. Supposing it possible that he would yet be glad to swell the volume, I have given him an order to draw upon me for eight hundred lines, if he chooses it: "Conversation," a piece which I think I mentioned in my last to Mr. Newton, being finished. If Johnson sends for it, I shall transcribe it as soon as I can, and transmit it to Charles-square. Mr. Newton will take the trouble to forward it to the press. It is not a dialogue, as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to "Table Talk," except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Providence when he endued them with the faculty of speech; to point out the abuses, which is the jocular

* Private correspondence.

part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober.

We felt ourselves not the less obliged to you for the cocoa-nuts, though they were good for nothing. They contained nothing but a putrid liquor, with a round white lump, which in taste and substance much resembled tallow, and was of the size of a small walnut. Nor am I the less indebted to your kindness for the fish, though none is yet come.

Yours, dear Madam,
Most affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Aug 16, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I might date my letter from the greenhouse, which we have converted into a summer parlor. The walls hung with garden mats, and the floor covered with a carpet, the sun, too, in a great measure, excluded by an awning of mats, which forbids him to shine anywhere except upon the carpet, it affords us by far the pleasantest retreat in Olney. We eat, drink, and sleep, where we always did; but here we spend all the rest of our time, and find that the sound of the wind in the trees, and the singing of birds, are much more agreeable to our ears than the incessant barking of dogs and screaming of children. It is an observation that naturally occurs upon the occasion, and which many other occasions furnish an opportunity to make, that people long for what they have not, and overlook the good in their possession. This is so true in the present instance, that for years past I should have thought myself happy to enjoy a retirement, even less flattering to my natural taste than this in which I am now writing; and have often looked wistfully at a snug cottage, which, on account of its situation, at a distance from noise and disagreeable objects, seemed to promise me all I could wish or expect, so far as happiness may be said to be local: never once adverting to this comfortable nook, which affords me all that could be found in the most sequestered hermitage, with the advantage of having all those accommodations near at hand which no hermitage could possibly afford me. People imagine they should be happy in circumstances which they would find insupportably burthensome in less than a week. A man that has been clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, envies the peasant under a thatched hovel; who, in return, envies him as much his palace and his pleasure-ground. Could they change situations, the fine gentleman would find his ceilings were too low, and that his casements admitted too much wind; that he had no cellar for his wine, and no wine to put in his cellar. These, with a thousand other mortifying deficiencies, would shatter his romantic project into innumerable fragments in a moment. The clown, at the same time, would find the accession of so much unwieldy treasure an incumbrance quite incompatible with an hour's ease. His choice would be puzzled by variety. He would drink to excess, because he would foresee no end of his abundance; and he would eat himself sick for the same reason. He would have no idea of any other happiness than sensual gratification; would make himself a beast, and die of his good fortune. The rich gentleman had, perhaps, or might have had, if he pleased, at the shortest notice, just such a recess as this; but if he had it, he overlooked it, or, if he had it not, forgot that he might command it whenever he would. The rustic, too, was actually in possession of some blessings, which he was a fool to relinquish, but which he could neither see nor feel, because he had the daily and constant use of them; such as good health, bodily strength, a head and a heart that never ached, and temperance, to the practice of which he was bound by necessity, that, humanly speaking, was a pledge and security for the continuance of them all.

Thus I have sent you a schoolboy's theme. When I write to you, I do not write without thinking, but always without premeditation: the consequence is, that such thoughts as pass through my head when I am not writing make the subject of my letters to you.

Johnson sent me lately a sort of apology for his printer's negligence, with his promise of greater diligence for the future. There was need enough of both. I have received but one sheet since you left us. Still, indeed, I see that there is time enough before us; but I see, likewise, that no length of time can be sufficient for the accomplishment of a work that does not go forward. I know not yet whether he will add "Conversation" to those poems already in his hands, nor do I care much. No man ever wrote such quantities of verse as I have written this last year with so much indifference about the event, or rather with so little ambition of public praise. My pieces are such as may possibly be made useful. The more they are approved, the more likely they are to spread, and, consequently, the more likely to attain the end of usefulness; which, as I said once before, except my present amusement, is the only end I propose. And, even in the pursuit of this purpose, commendable as it is in itself, I have not the spur I should once have had; my labor must go unrewarded; and, as Mr. R—— once said, I am raising a scaffold before a house that others are to live in, and not I.

I have left myself no room for politics, which I thought, when I began, would have been my principal theme.

Yours, my dear sir, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

The striking and beautiful imagery, united with the depressive spirit of the following letter, will engage the attention of the discerning reader.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Aug. 21, 1781.

My dear Friend,—You wish you could employ your time to better purpose, yet are never idle. In all that you say or do; whether you are alone, or pay visits, or receive them; whether you think, or write, or walk, or sit still; the state of your mind is such as discovers, even to yourself, in spite of all its wanderings, that there is a principle at bottom, whose determined tendency is towards the best things. I do not at all doubt the truth of what you say, when you complain of that crowd of trifling thoughts that pester you without ceasing; but then you always have a serious thought standing at the door of your imagination, like a justice of peace with the riot-act in his hand, ready to read it and disperse the mob. Here lies the difference between you and me. My thoughts are clad in a sober livery, for the most part as grave as that of a bishop's servants. They turn, too, upon spiritual subjects, but the tallest fellow, and the loudest amongst them all, is he who is continually crying, with a loud voice, *Actum est de te, periisti.* You wish for more attention, I for less. Dissipation itself would be welcome to me, so it were not a vicious one; but, however earnestly invited, it is coy, and keeps at a distance. Yet, with all this distressing gloom upon my mind, I experience, as you do, the slipperiness of the present hour, and the rapidity with which time escapes me. Everything around us, and everything that befalls us, constitutes a variety, which, whether agreeable or otherwise, has still a thievish propensity, and steals from us days, months, and years, with such unparalleled address, that even while we say they are here they are gone. From infancy to manhood is rather a tedious period, chiefly, I suppose, because, at that time we act under the control of others, and are not suffered to have a will of our own. But thence downward into the vale of years is such a declivity, that we have just an opportunity to reflect upon the steepness of it, and then find ourselves at the bottom.

Here is a new scene opening, which, whether it perform what it promises or not, will add fresh plumes to the wings of time; at least while it continues to be a subject of contemplation. If the project take effect, a thousand varieties will attend the change it will make in our situation at Olney. If not, it will serve, however, to speculate and converse upon, and steal away many hours, by engaging our attention, before it be entirely dropped. Lady Austen, very desirous of retirement, especially of a retirement near her sister, an admirer of Mr. Scott as a preacher, and of your two humble servants now in the greenhouse as the most agreeable creatures in the world, is at present determined to settle here. That part of our great building which is at present occupied by Dick Coleman, his wife, child, and a thousand rats, is the corner of the world she chooses above all others as the place of her future residence. Next spring twelvemonth she begins to repair and beautify, and the following winter (by which time the lease of her house in town will determine) she intends to take possession. I am highly pleased with the plan upon Mrs. Unwin's account, who, since Mrs. Newton's departure, is destitute of all female connexion, and has not, in any emergency, a woman to speak to. Mrs. Scott is indeed in the neighborhood, and an excellent person, but always engaged by a close attention to her family, and no more than ourselves a lover of visiting. But these things are all at present in the clouds. Two years must intervene, and in two years not only this project, but all the projects in Europe may be disconcerted.

Cocoa-nut naught,
Fish too dear,
None must be bought
For us that are here;

No lobster on earth
That ever I saw,
To me would be worth
Sixpence a claw.

So, dear Madam, wait
Till fish can be got
At a reas'nable rate,
Whether lobster or not.

Till the French and the Dutch
Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much,
And as oft as you please.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Aug. 25, 1781.

My dear Friend,—We rejoice with you sincerely in the birth of another son, and in the prospect you have of Mrs. Unwin's recovery: may your three children, and the next three, when they shall make their appearance, prove so many blessings to their parents, and make you wish that you had twice the number! But what made you expect daily that you should hear from me? Letter for letter is the law of all correspondence whatsoever, and, because I wrote last, I have indulged myself for some time in expectation of a

* Private correspondence.

sheet from you. Not that I govern myself entirely by the punctilio of reciprocation, but having been pretty much occupied of late, I was not sorry to find myself at liberty to exercise my discretion, and furnished with a good excuse if I chose to be silent.

I expected, as you remember, to have been published last spring, and was disappointed. The delay has afforded me an opportunity to increase the quantity of my publication by about a third; and, if my Muse has not forsaken me, which I rather suspect to be the case, may possibly yet add to it. I have a subject in hand, which promises me a great abundance of poetical matter, but which, for want of a something I am not able to describe, I cannot at present proceed with. The name of it is "Retirement," and my purpose, to recommend the proper improvement of it, to set forth the requisites for that end, and to enlarge upon the happiness of that state of life, when managed as it ought to be. In the course of my journey through this ample theme, I should wish to touch upon the characters, the deficiences, and the mistakes of thousands, who enter on a scene of retirement unqualified for it in every respect, and with such designs as have no tendency to promote either their own happiness or that of others. But as I have told you before, there are times when I am no more a poet than I am a mathematician, and when such a time occurs, I always think it better to give up the point than to labor it in vain. I shall yet again be obliged to trouble you for franks, the addition of three thousand lines, or near that number, having occasioned a demand which I did not always foresee, but your obliging friend and your obliging self having allowed me the liberty of application, I make it without apology.

The solitude, or rather the duality, of our condition at Olney seems drawing to a conclusion. You have not forgot perhaps that the building we inhabit consists of two mansions. And, because you have only seen the inside of that part of it which is in our occupation, I therefore inform you that the other end of it is by far the most superb, as well as the most commodious. Lady Austen has seen it, has set her heart upon it, is going to fit it up and furnish it, and, if she can get rid of the remaining two years of the lease of her London house, will probably enter upon it in a twelvemonth. You will be pleased with this intelligence, because I have already told you that she is a woman perfectly well-bred, sensible, and in every respect agreeable; and above all, because she loves your mother dearly. It has in my eyes (and I doubt not it will have the same in yours) strong marks of providential interposition. A female friend, and one who bids fair to prove herself worthy of the appellation, comes recommended by a variety of considerations to such a place as Olney. Since Mr. Newton went, and till this lady came, there was not in the kingdom a retirement more absolutely such than ours. We did not want company, but when it came we found it agreeable. A person that has seen much of the world and understands it well, has high spirits, a lively fancy, and great readiness of conversation, introduces a sprightliness into such a scene as this, which, if it was peaceful before, is not the worse for being a little enlivened. In case of illness too, to which all are liable, it was rather a gloomy prospect, if we allowed ourselves to advert to it, that there was hardly a woman in the place from whom it would have been reasonable to have expected either comfort or assistance. The present curate's wife is a valuable person, but has a family of her own, and, though a neighbor, is not a very near one. But, if this plan is effected, we shall be in a manner one family, and I suppose never pass a day without some intercourse with each other.

Your mother sends her warm affections, and welcomes into the world the new-born William.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Aug. 25, 1781.

My dear Friend,—By Johnson's last note, (for I have received a packet from him since I wrote last to you,) I am ready to suspect that you have seen him, and endeavored to quicken his proceedings. His assurrance of greater expedition leads me to think so. I know little of booksellers and printers, but have heard from others that they are the most dilatory of all people; otherwise, I am not in a hurry, nor would be so troublesome; but am obliged to you nevertheless for your interference, if his promised alacrity be owing to any spur that you have given him. He chooses to add "Conversation" to the rest, and says he will give me notice when he is ready for it; but I shall send it to *you* by the first opportune conveyance, and beg you to deliver it over to him. He wishes me not to be afraid of making the volume too large: by which expression I suppose he means, that if I had still another piece, there would be room for it. At present I have not, but am in the way to produce another, *faveat modo Musa*. I have already begun and proceeded a little way in a poem called "Retirement." My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultivation of a man's best interests; to censure the vices and the follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their

* Private correspondence.

leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favorite appetites, and to pay themselves by a life of pleasure for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is, at present, in embryo. I generally despair of my progress when I begin; but if, like my travelling 'squire, I should kindle as I go, this likewise may make a part of the volume, for I have time enough before me.

I forgot to mention that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him, with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me, he noted three such, all which I have reduced into better order. In the foregoing sheet, I assented to his criticism in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expression in others. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough: and perhaps it would be as well for authors in general, if their booksellers, when men of some taste, were allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves, yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Sept. 9, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I am not willing to let the post set off without me, though I have nothing material to put into his bag. I am writing in the greenhouse, where my myrtles, ranged before the windows, make the most agreeable blind imaginable; where I am undisturbed by noise, and where I see none but pleasing objects. The situation is as favorable to my purpose as I could wish; but the state of my mind is not so, and the deficiencies I feel there are not to be remedied by the stillness of my retirement or the beauty of the scene before me. I believe it is in part owing to the excessive heat of the weather that I find myself so much at a loss when I attempt either verse or prose: my animal spirits are depressed, and dulness is the consequence. That dulness, however, is all at your service; and the portion of it that is necessary to fill up the present epistle I send you without the least reluctance.

I am sorry to find that the censure I have passed upon Occiduus is even better founded than I supposed. Lady Austen has been at his sabbatical concerts, which, it seems, are composed of song-tunes and psalm-tunes indiscriminately; music without words—and I suppose one may say, consequently, without devotion. On a certain occasion, when her niece was sitting at her side, she asked his opinion concerning the lawfulness of such amusements as are to be found at Vauxhall or Ranelagh; meaning only to draw from him a sentence of disapprobation, that Miss Green might be the better reconciled to the restraint under which she was held, when she found it warranted by the judgment of so famous a divine. But she was disappointed: he accounted them innocent, and recommended them as useful. Curiosity, he said, was natural to young persons; and it was wrong to deny them a gratification which they might be indulged in with the greatest safety; because, the denial being unreasonable, the desire of it would still subsist. It was but a walk, and a walk was as harmless in one place as another; with other arguments of a similar import, which might have proceeded with more grace, at least with less offence, from the lips of a sensual layman. He seems, together with others of our acquaintance, to have suffered considerably in his spiritual character by his attachment to music. The lawfulness of it, when used with moderation and in its proper place, is unquestionable; but I believe that wine itself, though a man be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more debauch and befool the natural understanding than music, always music, music in season and out of season, weakens and destroys the spiritual discernment. If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the performance of it, which cannot be the case when it is the only occupation, it degenerates into a sensual delight, and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same.*

Mr. M——, though a simple, honest, good man—such, at least, he appears to us—is not likely to give general satisfaction. He preaches the truth it seems, but not the whole truth; and a certain member of that church, who signed the letter of invitation, which was conceived in terms sufficiently encouraging, is likely to prove one of his most strenuous opposers. The little man, however, has an independent fortune, and has nothing to do but to trundle himself away to some other place, where he may find hearers neither so nice nor so wise as we are at Olney.

Yours, my dear Sir,
With our united love, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.†

Olney, Sept. 16, 1781.

A noble theme demands a noble verse,
In such I thank you for your fine oysters.

* Private correspondence.

* It is recorded of the Rev. Mr. Cecil, that, being passionately fond of playing on the violin, and, finding that it engrossed too much of his time and thoughts, he one day took it into his hands and broke it to pieces.

† Private correspondence.

The barrel was magnificently large,
But, being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd;
For, when the messenger whom we dispatch'd
Inquir'd for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd;
Denying that his wagon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;
In consequence of which some chanc'd to die,
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.
Now Madam says (and what she says must still
Deserve attention, say she what she will,)
That what we call the diligence, be-cause
It goes to London with a swifter pace,
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
Returning downward with a pace as swift;
And therefore recommends it with this aim—
To save at least three days—the price the same;
For though it will not carry or convey [may,
For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you
For oysters bred upon the salt sea-shore,
Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.

News have I none that I can deign to write,
Save that it rain'd prodigiously last night;
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
Caught in the first beginning of the show'r;
But walking, running, and with much ado
Got home—just time enough to be wet through.
Yet both are well, and, wond'rous to be told,
Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;
And wishing just the same good hap to you,
We say, good Madam, and good Sir, adieu!

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

The Greenhouse, Sept. 18, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I return your preface, with many thanks for so affectionate an introduction to the public. I have observed nothing that in my judgment required alteration, except a single sentence in the first paragraph, which I have not obliterated, that you may restore it, if you please, by obliterating my interlineation. My reason for proposing an amendment of it was, that your meaning did not immediately strike me, which therefore I have endeavored to make more obvious. The rest is what I would wish it to be. You say, indeed, more in my commendation than I can modestly say of myself: but something will be allowed to the partiality of friendship on so interesting an occasion.

I have no objection in the world to your conveying a copy to Dr. Johnson: though I well know that one of his pointed sarcasms, if he should happen to be displeased, would soon find its way into all companies, and spoil the sale. He writes, indeed, like a man that thinks a great deal, and that sometimes thinks religiously: but report informs me that he has been severe enough in his animadversions upon Dr. Watts, who was, nevertheless, if I am in any degree a judge of verse, a man of true poetical ability; careless, indeed, for the most part, and inattentive too often to those nicetics which constitute elegance of expression, but frequently sublime in his conceptions and masterly in his execution. Pope, I have heard, had placed him once in the Dunciad; but, on being advised to read before he judged him, was convinced that he deserved other treatment, and thrust somebody's blockhead into the gap, whose name, consisting of a monosyllable, happened to fit it. Whatever faults, however, I may be chargeable with as a poet, I cannot accuse myself of negligence. I never suffer a line to pass till I have made it as good as I can: and, though my doctrines may offend this king of critics, he will not, I flatter myself, be disgusted by slovenly inaccuracy, either in the numbers, rhymes, or language. Let the rest take its chance. It is possible he may be pleased; and, if he should, I shall have engaged on my side one of the best trumpeters in the kingdom. Let him only speak as favorably of me as he has spoken of Sir Richard Blackmore (who, though he shines in his poem called Creation, has written more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country,) and my success will be secured.

I have often promised myself a laugh with you about your pipe, but have always forgotten it when I have been writing, and at present I am not much in a laughing humor. You will observe, however, for your comfort and the honor of that same pipe, that it hardly falls within the line of my censure. You never fumigate the ladies, or force them out of company: nor do you use it as an incentive to hard drinking. Your friends, indeed, have reason to complain that it frequently deprives them of the pleasure of your own conversation, while it leads you either into your study or your garden: but in all other respects it is as innocent a pipe as can be. Smoke away, therefore; and remember that, if one poet has condemned the practice, a better than he (the witty and elegant Hawkins Browne*) has been warm in the praise of it.

"Retirement" grows, but more slowly than any of its predecessors. Time was when I could with ease produce fifty, sixty, or seventy lines in a morning; now, I generally fall short of thirty, and am sometimes forced to be content with a dozen. It consists, at

* Private correspondence.

* Author of the popular poem, "De Animi Immortalitate," written in the style of Lucretius. The humorous poem alluded to by Cowper, in praise of smoking, is entitled "The Pipe of Tobacco." It is remarkable as exhibiting a happy imitation of the style of six different authors—Gibber, Ambrose Philips, Thomson, Pope, Swift, and Young. The singularity and talent discoverable in this production procured for it much celebrity. An edition of his Poems was published by his son, Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esq.

present, I suppose, of between six and seven hundred: so that there are hopes of an end, and I dare say Johnson will give me time enough to finish it.

I nothing add but this—that *still I am*
Your most affectionate and humble

WILLIAM.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, Sept. 26, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I may, I suppose, congratulate you on your safe arrival at Brighthelmstone; and am the better pleased with your design to close the summer there, because I am acquainted with the place, and, by the assistance of fancy, can without much difficulty join myself to the party, and partake with you in your amusements and excursions. It happened singularly enough, that, just before I received your last, in which you apprise me of your intended journey, I had been writing upon the subject, having found occasion, towards the close of my last poem, called "Retirement," to take some notice of the modern passion for sea-side entertainments, and to direct to the means by which they might be made useful as well as agreeable. I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion and even without reflection. In all its various forms, it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because, at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them. One of Shakspeare's characters says, "I am never merry when I hear sweet music." The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy not unpleasing nor without its use. So much for Signor Nettuno.

Lady Austen goes to London this day se'nnight. We have told her that you shall visit her; which is an enterprise you may engage in with the more alacrity, because, as she loves everything that has any connexion with your mother, she is sure to feel a sufficient partiality for her son. Add to this that your own personal recommendations are by no means small, or such as a woman of her fine taste and discernment can possibly overlook. She has many features in her character which you will admire; but one, in particular, on account of the rarity of it, will engage your attention and esteem. She has a degree of gratitude in her composition, so quick a sense of obligation, as is hardly to be found in any rank of life, and, if report say true, is scarce indeed in the superior. Discover but a wish to please her, and she never forgets it; not only thanks you, but the tears will start into her eyes at the recollection of the smallest service. With these fine feelings, she has the most, and the most harmless, vivacity you can imagine. In short, she is—what you will find her to be, upon half an hour's conversation with her; and, when I hear you have a journey to town in contemplation, I will send you her address.

Your mother is well, and joins with me in wishing that you may spend your time agreeably upon the coast of Sussex.

Yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Oct. 4, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I generally write the day before the post, but yesterday had no opportunity, being obliged to employ myself in settling my greenhouse for the winter. I am now writing before breakfast, that I may avail myself of every inch of time for the purpose. N. B. An expression a critic would quarrel with, and call it by some hard name, signifying a jumble of ideas and an unnatural match between time and space.

I am glad to be undeceived respecting the opinion I had been erroneously led into on the subject of Johnson's criticism on Watts. Nothing can be more judicious, or more characteristic of a distinguishing taste, than his observations upon that writer; though I think him a little mistaken in his notion that divine subjects have never been poetically treated with success. A little more Christian knowledge and experience would perhaps enable him to discover excellent poetry upon spiritual themes in the aforesaid little Doctor. I perfectly acquiesce in the propriety of sending Johnson a copy of my productions; and I think it would be well to send it in our joint names, accompanied with a handsome card, such a one as you will know how to fabricate, and such as may predispose him to a favorable perusal of the book, by coaxing him into a good temper: for he is a great bear, with all his learning and penetration.†

I forgot to tell you in my last that I was well pleased with your proposed appearance in the title-page under the name of the editor. I do not care under how many names you

* Private correspondence.

† Goldsmith used to say of Johnson, that he had nothing of the bear but the external roughness of its coat.

appear in a book that calls me its author. In my last piece, which I finished the day before yesterday, I have told the public that I live upon the banks of the Ouse: that public is a great simpleton if it does not know that you live in London; it will consequently know that I had need of the assistance of some friend in town, and that I could have recourse to nobody with more propriety than yourself. I shall transcribe and submit to your approbation as fast as possible. I have now, I think, finished my volume; indeed I am almost weary of composing, having spent a year in doing nothing else. I reckon my volume will consist of about eight thousand lines.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 6, 1781.

My dear friend,—What a world are you daily conversant with, which I have not seen these twenty years, and shall never see again! The arts of dissipation (I suppose) are nowhere practised with more refinement or success than at the place of your present residence. By your account of it, it seems to be just what it was when I visited it,—a scene of idleness and luxury, music, dancing, cards, walking, riding, bathing, eating, drinking, coffee, tea, scandal, dressing, yawning, sleeping, the rooms perhaps more magnificent, because the proprietors are grown richer, but the manners and occupations of the company just the same. Though my life has long been that of a recluse, I have not the temper of one, nor am I in the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good humor; but I cannot envy you your situation: I even feel myself constrained to prefer the silence of this nook, and the snug fireside in our own diminutive parlor, to all the splendor and gayety of Brighton.

You ask me how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication? Perfectly at my ease. If I had not been pretty well assured beforehand that my tranquillity would be but little endangered by such a measure, I would never have engaged in it: for I cannot bear disturbance. I have had in view two principal objects; first, to amuse myself; and, secondly, to compass that point in such a manner that others might possibly be the better for my amusement. If I have succeeded, it will give me pleasure; but, if I have failed, I shall not be mortified to the degree that might perhaps be expected. I remember an old adage (though not where it is to be found) "*bene vixit, qui bene latuit*," and, if I had recollected it at the right time, it should have been the motto to my book. By the way, it will make an excellent one for "Retirement," if you can but tell me whom to quote for it. The critics cannot deprive me of the pleasure I have in reflecting, that, so far as my leisure has been employed in writing for the public, it has been conscientiously employed, and with a view to their advantage. There is nothing agreeable, to be sure, in being chronicled for a dunce; but, I believe, there lives not a man upon earth who would be less affected by it than myself. With all this indifference to fame, which you know me too well to suppose me capable of affecting, I have taken the utmost pains to deserve it. This may appear a mystery or a paradox in practice, but it is true. I considered that the taste of the day is refined and delicate to excess, and that to disgust that delicacy of taste, by a slovenly inattention to it, would be to forfeit, at once, all hope of being useful; and for this reason, though I have written more verse this last year than perhaps any man in England, I have finished, and polished, and touched, and retouched, with the utmost care. If after all I should be converted into waste paper, it may be my misfortune, but it will not be my fault. I shall bear it with the most perfect serenity.

I do not mean to give —— a copy; he is a good-natured little man, and crows exactly like a cock, but knows no more of verse than the cock he imitates.

Whoever supposes that Lady Austen's fortune is precarious is mistaken. I can assure you, upon the ground of the most circumstantial and authentic information, that it is both genteel and perfectly safe.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Oct. 14, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I would not willingly deprive you of any comfort, and therefore would wish you to comfort yourself as much as you can with a notion that you are a more bountiful correspondent than I. You will give me leave in the meantime, however, to assert to myself a share in the same species of consolation, and to enjoy the flattering recollection that I have sometimes written three letters to your one. I never knew a poet, except myself, who was punctual in anything, or to be depended on for the due discharge of any duty, except what he thought he owed to the Muses. The moment a man takes it into his foolish head that he has what the world calls genius, he gives himself a discharge from the servile drudgery of all friendly offices, and becomes good for nothing except in the pursuit of his favorite employment. But I am not yet vain enough to think myself entitled to such self-conferred

* Private correspondence.

honors; and, though I have sent much poetry to the press, or, at least, what I hope my readers will account such, am still as desirous as ever of a place in your heart, and to take all opportunities to convince you that you have still the same in mine. My attention to my poetical function has, I confess, a little interfered of late with my other employments, and occasioned my writing less frequently than I should have otherwise done. But it is over, at least for the present, and I think for some time to come. I have transcribed "Retirement," and send it. You will be so good as to forward it to Johnson, who will forward it, I suppose, to the public, in his own time; but not very speedily, moving as he does. The post brought me a sheet this afternoon, but we have not yet reached the end of "Hope."

Mr. Scott, I perceive by yours to him, has mentioned one of his troubles, but, I believe, not the principal one. The question, whether he shall have an assistant at the great house in Mr. R——, is still a question, or, at least, a subject of discontent between Mr. Scott and the people. In a *tete-a-tete* I had with this candidate for the chair in the course of the last week, I told him my thoughts upon the subject plainly; advised him to change places, by the help of fancy, with Mr. Scott, for a moment, and to ask himself how *he* would like a self-intruded deputy; advised him likewise by no means to address Mr. Scott any more upon the matter, for that he might be sure he would never consent to it; and concluded with telling him that, if he persisted in his purpose of speaking to the people, the probable consequence would be that, sooner or later, Mr. Scott would be forced out of the parish, and the blame of his expulsion would all light upon him. He heard, approved, and I think the very next day put all my good counsel to shame, at least, a considerable part of it, by applying to Mr. Scott, in company with Mr. P——, for his permission to speak at the Sunday evening lecture. Mr. Scott, as I had foretold, was immovable; but offered, for the satisfaction of his hearers, to preach three times to them on the Sabbath, which he could have done, Mr. Jones having kindly offered, though without their knowledge, to officiate for him at Weston. Mr. R. answered, "That will not do, Sir; it is not what the people wish: they want variety." Mr. Scott replied very wisely, "If they do, they must be content without it; it is not my duty to indulge that humor." This is the last intelligence I have had upon the subject. I received it not from Mr. Scott, but from an ear-witness.

I did not suspect, till the reviewers told me so, that you are made up of artifice and design, and that your ambition is to delude your hearers. Well, I suppose they please themselves with the thought of having mortified you; but how much are they mistaken! They shot at you, and their arrow struck the Bible, recoiling, of course, upon themselves. My turn will come, for I think I shall hardly escape a thrashing.

Yours, my dear sir,

And Mrs. Newton's, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Olney, Oct. 19, 1781.

My dear Cousin,—Your fear lest I should think you unworthy of my correspondence, on account of your delay to answer, may change sides now, and more properly belongs to me. It is long since I received your last, and yet I believe I can say truly, that not a post has gone by me since the receipt of it, that has not reminded me of the debt I owe you for your obliging and unreserved communications both in prose and verse, especially for the latter, because I consider them as marks of your peculiar confidence. The truth is, I have been such a verse-maker myself, and so busy in preparing a volume for the press, which I imagine will make its appearance in the course of the winter, that I hardly had leisure to listen to the calls of any other engagement. It is, however, finished, and gone to the printer's, and I have nothing now to do with it but to correct the sheets as they are sent to me, and consign it over to the judgment of the public. It is a bold undertaking at this time of day, when so many writers of the greatest abilities have gone before, who seem to have anticipated every valuable subject, as well as all the graces of poetical embellishment, to step forth into the world in the character of a bard, especially when it is considered that luxury, idleness, and vice, have debauched the public taste, and that nothing hardly is welcome but childish fiction, or what has, at least, a tendency to excite a laugh. I thought, however, that I had stumbled upon some subjects that had never before been poetically treated, and upon some others to which I imagined it would not be difficult to give an air of novelty by the manner of treating them. My sole drift is to be useful; a point which, however, I knew I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings upon my bow, and by the help of both have done my best to send the arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh, before they will be called upon to correct that levity and peruse me with a more serious air. As to the effect I leave it alone in His hands who can alone produce it; neither prose nor verse can reform the manners of a dissolute age, much less can they inspire a sense of

religious obligation, unless assisted and made efficacious by the Power who superintends the truth he has vouchsafed to impart.

You made my heart ache with a sympathetic sorrow when you described the state of your mind on occasion of your late visit into Hertfordshire. Had I been previously informed of your journey before you made it, I should have been able to have foretold all your feelings with the most unerring certainty of prediction. You will never cease to feel upon that subject, but, with your principles of resignation and acquiescence in the divine will, you will always feel as becomes a Christian. We are forbidden to murmur, but we are not forbidden to regret; and whom we loved tenderly while living, we may still pursue with an affectionate remembrance, without having any occasion to charge ourselves with rebellion against the sovereignty that appointed a separation. A day is coming when, I am confident, you will see and know that mercy to both parties was the principal agent in a scene, the recollection of which is still painful.

W. C.

Those who read what the poet has here said of his intended publication may perhaps think it strange that it was introduced to the world with a preface, not written by himself but by his friend Mr. Newton. The circumstance arose from two amiable peculiarities in the character of Cowper—his extreme diffidence in regard to himself, and his kind eagerness to gratify the affectionate ambition of a friend whom he tenderly esteemed! Mr. Newton has avowed this feeling in a very ingenuous and candid manner. He seems not to have been insensible to the honor of presenting himself to the public as the bosom friend of that incomparable author whom he had attended so faithfully in sickness and sorrow.

In the course of the following letters, the reader will find occasion to admire the grateful delicacy of the poet, not only towards the writer of his preface, but even in the liberal praise with which he speaks of his publisher.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Oct. 22, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Mr. Bates, without intending it, has passed a severer censure upon the modern world of readers, than any that can be found in my volume. If they are so merrily disposed, in the midst of a thousand calamities, that they will not deign to read a preface of three or four pages, because the purport of it is serious, they are far gone indeed, and in the last stage of a frenzy, such as I suppose has prevailed in all nations that have been exemplarily punished, just before the infliction of the sentence. But, though he lives in the world he has so ill an opinion of, and ought therefore to know it better than I, who have no intercourse with it at all, I am willing to hope that he may be mistaken. Curiosity is a universal passion. There are few people who think a book worth their reading, but feel a desire to know something about the writer of it. This desire will naturally lead them to peep into the preface, where they will soon find that a little perseverance will furnish them with some information on the subject. If, therefore your preface finds no readers, I shall take it for granted that it is because the book itself is accounted not worth their notice. Be that as it may, it is quite sufficient that I have played the antic myself for their diversion; and that, in a state of dejection such as they are absolute strangers to, I have sometimes put on an air of cheerfulness and vivacity, to which I myself am in reality a stranger, for the sake of winning their attention to more useful matter. I cannot endure the thought for a moment, that you should descend to my level on the occasion, and court their favor in a style not more unsuitable to your function than to the constant and consistent train of your whole character and conduct. No—let the preface stand. I cannot mend it. I could easily make a jest of it, but it is better as it is.

By the way—will it not be proper, as you have taken some notice of the modish dress I wear in "Table Talk" to include "Conversation" in the same description, which is (the first half of it at least) the most airy of the two? They will otherwise think, perhaps, that the observation might as well have been spared entirely; though I should have been sorry if it had, for when I am jocular I do violence to myself, and am therefore pleased with your telling them in a civil way that I play the fool to amuse them, not because I am one myself, but because I have a foolish world to deal with.

I am inclined to think that Mr. Scott will no more be troubled by Mr. R—— with applications of the sort I mentioned in my last. Mr. Scott, since I wrote that account, has related to us himself what passed in the course of their interview; and, it seems, the discourse ended with his positive assurance that he never would consent to the measure, though, at the same time, he declared he would never interrupt or attempt to suppress it. To which Mr. R—— replied, that unless he had his free consent, he should never engage in the office. It is to be hoped, therefore, that, in time, that part of the people who may at present be displeased with Mr. Scott for withholding his consent, will grow cool upon the subject, and be satisfied

* Private correspondence.

with receiving their instruction from their proper minister.

I beg you will, on no future occasion, leave a blank for Mrs. Newton, unless you have first engaged her promise to fill it; for thus we lose the pleasure of your company, without being indemnified for the loss by the acquisition of hers. Our love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 5, 1781.

My dear William,—I give you joy of your safe return from the lips of the great deep. You did not discern many signs of sobriety or true wisdom among the people of Brighthelmstone, but it is not possible to observe the manners of a multitude, of whatever rank, without learning something; I mean if a man has a mind like yours, capable of reflection. If he sees nothing to imitate, he is sure to see something to avoid; if nothing to congratulate his fellow creatures upon, at least much to excite his compassion. There is not, I think, so melancholy a sight in the world (an hospital is not to be compared with it) as that of a thousand persons distinguished by the name of gentry, who, gentle perhaps by nature, and made more gentle by education, have the appearance of being innocent and inoffensive, yet being destitute of all religion, or not at all governed by the religion they profess, are none of them at any great distance from an eternal state, where self-deception will be impossible, and where amusements cannot enter. Some of them, we may say, will be reclaimed—it is most probable indeed that some of them will, because mercy, if one may be allowed the expression, is fond of distinguishing itself by seeking its objects among the most desperate class; but the Scripture gives no encouragement to the warmest charity to hope for deliverance for them all. When I see an afflicted and unhappy man, I say to myself, there is, perhaps, a man whom the world would envy, if they knew the value of his sorrows, which are possibly intended only to soften his heart, and to turn his affections towards their proper centre. But when I see or hear of a crowd of voluptuaries, who have no ears but for music, no eyes but for splendor, and no tongue but for impertinence and folly—I say, or at least I see occasion to say—This is madness—this persisted in must have a tragical conclusion. It will condemn you not only as Christians unworthy of the name, but as intelligent creatures. You know by the light of nature, if you have not quenched it, that there is a God, and that a life like yours cannot be according to his will.

I ask no pardon of you for the gravity and gloominess of these reflections, which I stumbled on when I least expected it; though, to say the truth, these or others of a like complexion, are sure to occur to me when I think of a scene of public diversion like that you have lately left.

I am inclined to hope that Johnson told you the truth, when he said he should publish me soon after Christmas. His press has been rather more punctual in its remittances than it used to be; we have now but little more than two of the longest pieces, and the small ones that are to follow, by way of epilogue, to print off, and then the affair is finished. But once more I am obliged to gape for franks; only these, which I hope will be the last I shall want, at yours and Mr. ——'s convenient leisure.

We rejoice that you have so much reason to be satisfied with John's proficiency. The more spirit he has the better, if his spirit is but manageable, and put under such management, as your prudence and Mrs. Unwin's will suggest. I need not guard you against severity, of which I conclude there is no need, and which I am sure you are not at all inclined to practise without it; but perhaps if I was to whisper, beware of too much indulgence, I should only give a hint that the fondness of a father for a fine boy might seem to justify. I have no particular reason for the caution, at this distance it is not possible I should, but, in a case like yours, an admonition of that sort seldom wants propriety.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Nov. 7, 1781.

My dear Friend,—Having discontinued the practise of verse-making for some weeks, I now feel quite incapable of resuming it: and can only wonder at it as one of the most extraordinary incidents in my life that I should have composed a volume. Had it been suggested to me as a practicable thing in better days, though I should have been glad to have found it so, many hindrances would have conspired to withhold me from such an enterprise. I should not have dared, at that time of day to have committed my name to the public, and my reputation to the hazard of their opinion. But it is otherwise with me now. I am more indifferent about what may touch me in that point than ever I was in my life. The stake that would then have seemed important now seems trivial; and it is of little consequence to me, who no longer feel myself possessed of what I accounted infinitely more valuable, whether the world's verdict shall pronounce me a poet, or an empty pretender to the title. This happy coldness towards a

* Private correspondence.

matter so generally interesting to all rhymers left me quite at liberty for the undertaking, unfettered by fear, and under no restraints of that diffidence which is my natural temper, and which would either have made it impossible for me to commence an author by name, or would have insured my miscarriage if I had. In my last despatches to Johnson I sent him a new edition of the title-page, having discarded the Latin paradox which stood at the head of the former, and added a French motto to that from Virgil. It is taken from a volume of the excellent Caraccioli,* called *Jouissance de soi-même*, and strikes me as peculiarly apposite to my purpose.

Mr. Bull is an honest man. We have seen him twice since he received your orders to march hither, and faithfully told us it was in consequence of those orders that he came.—He dined with us yesterday; we were all in pretty good spirits, and the day passed very agreeably. It is not long since he called on Mr. Scott. Mr. R—— came in. Mr. Bull began, addressing himself to the former, "My friend, you are in trouble; you are unhappy; I read it in your countenance." Mr. Scott replied, he had been so, but he was better. "Come then," says Mr. Bull, "I will expound to you the cause of all your anxiety. You are too common; you make yourself cheap. Visit your people less, and converse more with your own heart. How often do you speak to them in the week?" Thrice.—"Ay, there it is. Your sermons are an old ballad; your prayers are an old ballad; and you are an old ballad too."—I would wish to tread in the steps of Mr. Newton.—"You do well to follow his steps in all other instances, but in this instance you are wrong, and so was he. Mr. Newton trod a path which no man but himself could have used so long as he did, and he wore it out long before he went from Olney. Too much familiarity and condescension cost him the estimation of his people. He thought he should insure their love, to which he had the best possible title, and by those very means he lost it. Be wise, my friend; take warning; make yourself scarce, if you wish that persons of little understanding should know how to prize you." When he related to us this harangue, so nicely adjusted to the case of the third person present, it did us both good, and as Jacques says,

"It made my lungs to crow like chanticleer."

Our love of you both, though often sent to London, is still with us. If it is not an inexhaustible well, (there is but one love that can with propriety be called so,) it is, however, a very deep one, and not likely to fail while we are living.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

* Marquis Caraccioli, born at Paris, 1732. It is now well known that the letters of Pope Ganganelli, though passing under the name of that pontiff, were composed by this writer. These letters, as well as all his writings, are distinguished by a sweet strain of moral feeling, that powerfully awakens the best emotions of the heart; but there is a want of more evangelical light. He is also the author of "La Jouissance de soi-même;" "La Conversation avec soi-même;" "La Grandeur d'Ame," &c.; and of "The Life of Madame de Maintenon."

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, Nov. 24, 1781.

My dear Friend,—News is always acceptable, especially from another world. I cannot tell you what has been done in the Chesapeake, but I can tell you what has passed in West Wycombe, in this county. Do you feel yourself disposed to give credit to the story of an apparition? No, say you. I am of your mind. I do not believe more than one in a hundred of those tales with which old woman frighten children, and teach children to frighten each other. But you are not such a philosopher, I suppose, as to have persuaded yourself that an apparition is an impossible thing. You can attend to a story of that sort, if well authenticated? Yes. Then I can tell you one.

You have heard, no doubt, of the romantic friendship that subsisted once between Paul Whitehead, and Lord le Despenser, the late Sir Francis Dashwood.—When Paul died, he left his lordship a legacy. It was his heart, which was taken out of his body, and sent as directed. His friend, having built a church, and at that time just finished it, used it as a mausoleum upon this occasion; and, having (as I think the newspapers told us at the time) erected an elegant pillar in the centre of it, on the summit of this pillar, enclosed in a golden urn, he placed the heart in question; but not as a lady places a china figure upon her mantel-tree, or on the top of her cabinet, but with much respectful ceremony and all the forms of funeral solemnity. He hired the best singers and the best performers. He composed an anthem for the purpose; he invited all the nobility and gentry in the country to assist at the celebration of these obsequies, and, having formed them all into an august procession, marched to the place appointed at their head, and consigned the posthumous treasure, with his own hands, to its state of honorable elevation. Having thus, as he thought, and as he might well think, (. . . . .) appeased the manes of the deceased, he rested satisfied with what he had done, and supposed his friend would rest. But not so,—about a week since I received a letter from a person who cannot have been misinformed, telling me that Paul has appeared frequently of late, and that there are few, if any, of his lordship's numerous household, who have not seen him,

* Private correspondence.

sometimes in the park, sometimes in the garden, as well as in the house, by day and by night, indifferently. I make no reflection upon this incident, having other things to write about and but little room.

I am much indebted to Mr. S—— for more franks, and still more obliged by the handsome note with which he accompanied them. He has furnished me sufficiently for the present occasion, and, by his readiness and obliging manner of doing it, encouraged me to have recourse to him, in case another exigence of the same kind should offer. A French author I was reading last night says, He that has written will write again. If the critics do not set their foot upon this first egg that I have laid and crush it, I shall probably verify his observation; and, when I feel my spirits rise, and that I am armed with industry sufficient for the purpose, undertake the production of another volume. At present, however, I do not feel myself so disposed; and, indeed, he that would write should read, not that he may retail the observations of other men, but that, being thus refreshed and replenished, he may find himself in a condition to make and to produce his own. I reckon it among my principal advantages, as a composer of verses, that I have not read an English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation, even of the best models, is my aversion; it is servile and mechanical, a trick that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all, if they had not written upon the pattern of somebody indeed original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it; and we imitate, in spite of ourselves, just in proportion as we admire. But enough of this.

Your mother, who is as well as the season of the year will permit, desires me to add her love.—The salmon you sent us arrived safe, and was remarkably fresh. What a comfort it is to have a friend who knows that we love salmon, and who cannot pass by a fishmonger's shop without finding his desire to send us some, a temptation too strong to be resisted.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Nov. 26, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I thank you much for your letter, which, without obliging me to travel to Wargrave at a time of year when journeying is not very agreeable, has introduced me in the most commodious manner, to a perfect acquaintance with your neat little garden, your old cottage, and above all, your most prudent and sagacious landlady. As much as I admire her, I admire much more that philosophical temper with which you seem to treat her: for I know few characters more provoking, to me at least, than the selfish, who are never honest, especially if, while they determine to pick your pocket, they have not ingenuity enough to conceal their purpose. But you are perfectly in the right, and act just as I would endeavor to do on the same occasion. You sacrifice everything to a retreat you admire, and, if the natural indolence of my disposition did not forsake me, so would I.

You might as well apologize for sending me forty pounds, as for writing about yourself. Of the two ingredients, I hardly know which made your letter the most agreeable (observe, I do not say the most acceptable). The draft, indeed, was welcome; but though it was so, yet it did not make me laugh. I laughed heartily at the account you give me of yourself, and your landlady, Dame Saveall, whose picture you have drawn, though not with a flattering hand, yet, I dare say, with a strong resemblance. As to you, I have never seen so much of you since I saw you in London, where you and I have so often made ourselves merry with each other's humor, yet never gave each other a moment's pain by doing so. We are both humorists, and it is well for your wife and my Mrs. Unwin that they have alike found out the way to deal with us.

More thanks to Mrs. Hill for her intentions. She has the true enthusiasm of a gardener, and I can pity her under her disappointment, having so large a share of that commodity myself.

Yours, my dear Sir, affectionately,
W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 26, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I wrote to you by the last post, supposing you at Stock; but, lest that letter should not follow you to Laytonstone, and you should suspect me of unreasonable delay, and lest the frank you have sent me should degenerate into waste paper and perish upon my hands, I write again. The former letter, however, containing all my present stock of intelligence, it is more than possible that this may prove a blank, or but little worthy your acceptance. You will do me the justice to suppose that, if I could be very entertaining I would be so, because, by giving me credit for such a willingness to please, you only allow me a share of that universal vanity which inclines every man, upon all occasions, to exhibit himself to the best advantage. To say the truth, however, when I write, as I do to you, not about

business, nor on any subject that approaches to that description. I mean much less my correspondent's amusement, which my modesty will not always permit me to hope for, than my own. There is a pleasure annexed to the communication of one's ideas, whether by word of mouth or by letter, which nothing earthly can supply the place of; and it is the delight we find in this mutual intercourse that not only proves us to be creatures intended for social life, but, more than anything else, perhaps, fits us for it. I have no patience with philosophers: they, one and all, suppose (at least I understand it to be a prevailing opinion among them) that man's weakness, his necessities, his inability to stand alone, have furnished the prevailing motive, under the influence of which he renounced at first a life of solitude, and became a gregarious creature. It seems to me more reasonable, as well as more honorable to my species, to suppose that generosity of soul and a brotherly attachment to our own kind, drew us, as it were, to one common centre, taught us to build cities and inhabit them, and welcome every stranger that would cast in his lot amongst us, that we might enjoy fellowship with each other and the luxury of reciprocal endearments, without which a paradise could afford no comfort. There are indeed all sorts of characters in the world; there are some whose understandings are so sluggish, and whose hearts are such mere clods, that they live in society without either contributing to the sweets of it, or having any relish for them. A man of this stamp passes by our window continually; I never saw him conversing with a neighbor but once in my life, though I have known him by sight these twelve years; he is of a very sturdy make, and has a round protuberance, which he evidently considers as his best friend, because it is his only companion, and it is the labor of his life to fill it. I can easily conceive that it is merely the love of good eating and drinking, and now and then the want of a new pair of shoes, that attaches this man so much to the neighborhood of his fellow mortals; for suppose these exigencies and others of a like kind to subsist no longer, and what is there that could give society the preference in his esteem? He might strut about with his two thumbs upon his hips in the wilderness; he could hardly be more silent than he is at Olney: and, for any advantage of comfort, of friendship, of brotherly affection, he could not be more destitute of such blessings there than in his present situation. But other men have something more to satisfy; there are the yearnings of the heart, which, let the philosphers say what they will, are more importunate than all the necessities of the body, that will not suffer a creature worthy to be called human to be content with an insulated life, or to look for his friends among the beasts of the forest.* Yourself, for instance! It is not because there are no tailors or pastrycooks to be found upon Salisbury plain, that you do not choose it for your abode, but because you are a philanthropist; because you are susceptible of social impressions; and have a pleasure of doing a kindness when you can. Now, upon the word of a poor creature, I have said all that I have said, without the least intention to say one word of it when I began. But thus it is with my thoughts—when you shake a crab-tree the fruit falls; good for nothing indeed when you have got it, but still the best that is to be expected from a crab-tree. You are welcome to them, such as they are; and, if you approve my sentiments, tell the philosophers of the day that I have outshot them all, and have discovered the true origin of society when I least looked for it. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, Nov. 27, 1781.

My dear Friend,—First Mr. Wilson, then Mr. Teedon, and lastly Mr. Whitford, each with a cloud of melancholy on his brow and with a mouth wide open, have just announced to us this unwelcome intelligence from America.‡ We are sorry to hear it, and should be more cast down than we are, if we did not know that this catastrophe was ordained beforehand, and that therefore neither conduct, nor courage, nor any means that can possibly be mentioned, could have prevented it. If the king and his ministry can be contented to close the business here, and, taking poor Dean Tucker's advice, resign the Americans into the hands of their new masters, it may be well for Old England. But, if they will still persevere, they will find it, I doubt, a hopeless contest to the last. Domestic murmurs will grow louder, and the hands of faction, being strengthened by this late miscarriage, will find it easy to set fire to the pile of combustibles they have been so long employed in building. These are my politics, and, for aught I can see, you and we, by our respective firesides, though neither connected with men in power, nor professing to possess any share of that sagacity which thinks itself qualified to wield the affairs of kingdoms, can make as probable conjectures, and look forward into futurity with as clear a sight as the greatest man in the cabinet.

* "There is a solitude of the gods, and there is the solitude of wild beasts."

† Private correspondence.

‡ The surrender of the army of Lord Cornwallis to the combined forces of America and France, Oct. 18th, 1781. It is remarkable that this event occurred precisely four years after the surrender of General Burgoyne, at Saratoga, in the same month, and almost on the same day. This disastrous occurrence decided the fate of the American war, which cost Great Britain an expenditure of one hundred and twenty millions, and drained it of its best blood, and exhausted its vital resources.

Though, when I wrote the passage in question, I was not at all aware of any impropriety in it, and though I have frequently, since that time, both read and recollected it with the same approbation, I lately became uneasy upon the subject, and had no rest in my mind for three days, till I resolved to submit it to a trial at your tribunal, and to dispose of it ultimately according to your sentence. I am glad you have condemned it, and, though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labor it may cost me, and rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry or a design to make a certain denomination of Christians odious, at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather my book were burnt than a single line of such a tendency should escape me.

We thank you for two copies of your Address to your Parishioners. The first I lent to Mr. Scott, whom I have not seen since I put it into his hands. You have managed your subject well; have applied yourself to despisers and absentees of every description, in terms so expressive of the interest you take in their welfare, that the most wrongheaded person cannot be offended. We both wish it may have the effect you intend, and that, prejudices and groundless apprehensions being removed, the immediate objects of your ministry may make a more considerable part of your congregation.

Yours, my dear Sir, as ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

FRAGMENT.

Same date.

My dear Friend,—A visit from Mr. Whitford shortened one of your letters to me; and now the cause has operated with the same effect upon one of mine to you. He is just gone, desired me to send his love, and talks of enclosing a letter to you in my next cover.

Literas tuas irato Sacerdoti scriptas, legi, perlegi, et ne verbum quidem mutandum censeo. Gratias tibi acturum si sapiat, existimo; sin aliter eveniat, amici tamen officium præstitisti, et te coram te vindicasti.

I have not written in Latin to show my scholarship, nor to excite Mrs. Newton's curiosity, nor for any other wise reason whatever; but merely because, just at that moment, it came into my head to do so.

I never wrote a copy of Mary and John in my life, except that which I sent to you. It was one of those bagatelles which sometimes spring up like mushrooms in my imagination, either while I am writing or just before I begin. I sent it to you, because to you I send anything that I think may raise a smile, but should never have thought of multiplying the impression. Neither did I ever repeat them to any one except Mrs. Unwin. The inference is fair and easy, that you have some friend who has a good memory.*

This afternoon the maid opened the parlor-door, and told us there was a lady in the kitchen. We desired she might be introduced, and prepared for the reception of Mrs. Jones. But it proved to be a lady unknown to us, and not Mrs. Jones. She walked directly up to Mrs. Unwin, and never drew back till their noses were almost in contact. It seemed as if she meant to salute her. An uncommon degree of familiarity, accompanied with an air of most extraordinary gravity, made me think her a little crazy. I was alarmed, and so was Mrs. Unwin. She had a bundle in her hand—a silk handkerchief tied up at the four corners. When I found she was not mad, I took her for a smuggler, and made no doubt but she had brought samples of contraband goods. But our surprise, considering the lady's appearance and deportment, was tenfold what it had been, when we found that it was Mary Philips's daughter, who had brought us a few apples by way of a specimen of a quantity she had for sale.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Olney, Dec. 2, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for the note. There is some advantage in having a tenant who is irregular in his payments: the longer the rent is withheld, the more considerable the sum when it arrives; to which we may add, that its arrival, being unexpected, a circumstance that obtains always in a degree exactly in proportion to the badness of the tenant, is always sure to be the occasion of an agreeable surprise; a sensation that deserves to be ranked among the pleasantest that belong to us.

I gave two hundred and fifty pounds for the chambers. Mr. Ashurst's receipt, and the receipt of the person of whom he purchased, are both among my papers; and when wanted, as I suppose they will be in case of a sale, shall be forthcoming at your order.

The conquest of America seems to go on but slowly. Our ill success in that quarter

* Private correspondence.

* The lines alluded to are the following, which appeared afterwards, somewhat varied, in the Elegant Extracts in Verse:

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
Should John wed a score, oh! the claws and the scratches!
It can't be a match: 'tis a bundle of matches.—Ed.

† Private correspondence.

will oblige me to suppress two pieces that I was rather proud of. They were written two or three years ago; not long after the double repulse sustained by Mr. D'Estaing at Lucia and at Savannah, and when our operations in the western world wore a more promising aspect. Presuming upon such promises, that I might venture to prophesy an illustrious consummation of the war, I did so. But my predictions proving false, the verse in which they were expressed must perish with them.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 4, 1781.

My dear Friend,—The present to the queen of France, and the piece addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, my only two political efforts, being of the predictive kind, and both falsified, or likely to be so, by the miscarriage of the royal cause in America, were already condemned when I received your last.† I have a poetical epistle which I wrote last summer, and another poem not yet finished, in stanzas, with which I mean to supply their places. Henceforth I have done with polities. The stage of national affairs is such a fluctuating scene that an event which appears probable to-day becomes impossible to-morrow; and unless a man were indeed a prophet, he cannot, but with the greatest hazard of losing his labor, bestow his rhymes upon future contingencies, which perhaps are never to take place but in his own wishes and in the reveries of his own fancy. I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig, and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavors. Prior's pieces of that sort were recommended to my particular notice; and, as that part of the present century was a season when clubs of a political character, and consequently political songs, were much in fashion, the best in that style, some written by Rowe, and I think some by Congreve, and many by other wits of the day, were proposed to my admiration. Being grown up, I became desirous of imitating such bright examples, and while I lived in the Temple produced several half-penny ballads, two or three of which had the honor to be popular. What we learn in childhood we retain long: and the successes we met with about three years ago, when D'Estaing was twice repulsed, once in America and once in the West Indies, having set fire to my patriotic zeal once more, it discovered itself by the same symptoms, and produced effects much like those it had produced before. But, unhappily, the ardor I felt upon the occasion, disdaining to be confined within the bounds of fact, pushed me upon uniting the prophetical with the poetical character, and defeated its own purpose.—I am glad it did. The less there is of that sort in my book the better; it will be more consonant to your character, who patronize the volume, and, indeed, to the constant tenor of my own thoughts upon public matters, that I should exhort my countrymen to repentance, than that I should flatter their pride—that vice for which, perhaps, they are even now so severely punished.

We are glad, for Mr. Barham's sake, that he has been happily disappointed. How little does the world suspect what passes in it every day!—that true religion is working the same wonders now as in the first ages of the church—that parents surrender up their children into the hands of God, to die at his own appointed moment, and by what death he pleases, without a murmur, and receive them again as if by a resurrection from the dead! The world, however, would be more justly chargeable with wilful blindness than it is, if all professors of the truth exem-

* Private correspondence.

† As the reader may wish to see the lines to Sir Joshua, they are here supplied from the documents left by Dr. Johnson. Those to the Queen of France are not found.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear President, whose art sublime
Gives perpetuity to time,
And bids transactions of a day,
That fleeting hours would waft away
To dark futurity, survive,
And in unfading beauty live,—
You cannot with a grace decline
A special mandate of the Nine—
Yourself, whatever task you choose,
So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus says the Sisterhood:—We come—
Fix well your pallet on your thumb,
Prepare the pencil and the tints—
We come to furnish you with hints.
French disappointment, British glory,
Must be the subject of my story.

First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
Then slope it to a point below;
Your outline easy, airy, light,
Fill'd up, becomes a paper kite.
Let independence, sanguine, horrid,
Blaze like a meteor on the forehead:
Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
Draw *six and twenty rueful faces*,
Each with a staring, stedfast eye,
Fix'd on his great and good ally..
France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—
Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,
Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
Takes charge of every flutt'ring sheet,
And lays them all at George's feet.

Iberia, trembling from afar,
Renounces the confed'rate war.
Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
France calls her shatter'd navies home:
Repenting Holland learns to mourn
The sacred treaties she has torn;
Astonishment and awe profound
Are stamp'd upon the nations round;
Without one friend, above all foes,
Britannia gives the world repose.

plified its power in their conduct as conspicuously as Mr. Barham.

Easterly winds and a state of confinement within our own walls suit neither me nor Mrs. Unwin; though we are both, to use the Irish term, rather unwell than ill.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Mrs. Madan is happy.—She will be found ripe, fall when she may.

We are sorry you speak doubtfully about a spring visit to Olney. Those doubts must not outlive the winter. W. C.

We now conclude this portion of our work. The incidents recorded in it cannot fail to excite interest, and to awaken a variety of reflections. Remarks of this kind will, however, appear more suitable, when all the details of the poet's singular history are brought to a close, and presented in a connected series. In the meantime we cannot but admire that divine wisdom and mercy, which often so remarkably overrules the darkest dispensations—

From seeming evil still educing good.

It might have been anticipated that the morbid temperament of Cowper would either have unfitted him for intellectual exertion, or that his productions would have been tinged with all the colors of distempered mind: but such was not the case. Whether he composed in poetry or prose, the effect upon his mind seems to have been similar to the influence of the harp of David over the spirit of Saul. The inward struggles of the soul yielded to the magic power of song; and the inimitable letter-writer forgot his sorrows in the sallies of his own sportive imagination. The peculiarity of his temperament, so far from restraining his powers, seems from his own account to have quickened them into action. "I write," he says, in one of his letters, "to amuse and forget myself; and yet always with the desire of benefiting others." His object in writing was twofold, and so was his success; for he wrote and forgot himself; and yet wrote in such a manner, as never to be forgotten by others.

We have now conducted Cowper to the threshhold of fame, with all its attendant hopes, fears, and anxieties; a fame resting on the noblest foundation, the application of the powers of genius to improvement of the age in which he lived. The circumstances under which he commenced his career as an Author are singular. They form a profitable subject of inquiry to those who analyze the operations of the human mind: for he wrote in the moments of depression and sorrow, under the influence of a morbid temperament, and with an imagination assailed by the most afflicting images. In the midst of these discouragements his mind burst forth from its prison-house, arrayed in all the charms of wit and humor, sportive without levity, and never provoking a smile at the expense of virtue.

A mind so constituted furnishes a remarkable proof of the wisdom and goodness of God; for it shows that the greatest trials are not without their alleviations, and that in the bitterest cup are to be found the ingredients of mercy. Who can tell how often the mind might lose its equilibrium, or sink under the pressure of its woes, were it not for the interposition of that Almighty Power which guides the planets in their orbits, and says to the great water, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Job xxxviii. 11.

We now resume the correspondence of Cowper which contains some incidental notices of his admired Poems of Friendship and Retirement.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 17, 1781.

My dear Friend,—The poem I had in hand when I wrote last is on the subject of Friendship. By the following post I received a packet from Johnson. The proof-sheet it contained brought our business down to the latter part of "Retirement;" the next will consequently introduce the first of the smaller pieces. The volume consisting, at least four-fifths of it, of heroic verse as it is called, and graver matter, I was desirous to displace the "Burning Mountain"† from the post it held in the van of the light infantry, and throw it into the rear. Having finished "Friendship," and fearing that, if I delayed to send it, the press would get the start of my intention, and knowing perfectly that, with respect to the subject and the subject matter of it, it contained nothing that you would think exceptionable, I took the liberty to transmit it to Johnson, and hope that the next post will return it to me printed. It consists of between thirty and forty stanzas; a length that qualifies it to supply the place of the two cancelled pieces, without the aid of the epistle I mentioned. According to the present arrangement, therefore, "Friendship," which is rather of a lively cast, though quite sober, will follow next after "Retirement," and "Ætna" will close the volume. Modern naturalists, I think, tell us that the volcano forms the mountain. I shall be charged therefore, perhaps, with an unphilosophical error in supposing that Ætna was once unconscious

* Private correspondence.

† The poem afterwards entitled "Heroism."—Vide Poems.

of intestine fires, and as lofty as at present before the commencement of the eruptions. It is possible, however, that the rule, though just in some instances, may not be of universal application; and, if it be, I do not know that a poet is obliged to write with a philosopher at his elbow, prepared always to bend down his imagination to mere matters of fact. You will oblige me by your opinion; and tell me, if you please, whether you think an apologetical note may be necessary; for I would not appear a dunce in matters that every Review reader must needs be apprized of. I say a note, because an alteration of the piece is impracticable; at least without cutting off its head, and setting on a new one; a task I should not readily undertake, because the lines which must, in that case, be thrown out, are some of the most poetical in the performance.

Possessing greater advantages, and being equally dissolute with the most abandoned of the neighboring nations, we are certainly more criminal than they. They *cannot* see, and we *will* not. It is to be expected, therefore, that when judgment is walking through the earth, it will come commissioned with the heaviest tidings to the people chargeable with the most perverseness. In the latter part of the Duke of Newcastle's administration, all faces gathered blackness. The people, as they walked the streets, had, every one of them, a countenance like what we may suppose to have been the prophet Jonah's, when he cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But our Nineveh too repented, that is to say, she was affected in a manner somewhat suitable to her condition. She was dejected; she learned an humbler language, and seemed, if she did not trust in God, at least to have renounced her confidence in herself. A respite ensued; the expected ruin was averted; and her prosperity became greater than ever. Again she became self-conceited and proud, as at the first; and how stands it with our Nineveh now? Even as you say: her distress is infinite, her destruction appears inevitable, and her heart as hard as the nether millstone. Thus, I suppose, it was when ancient Nineveh found herself agreeably disappointed: she turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and that flagrant abuse of mercy exposed her, at the expiration of forty years, to the complete execution of a sentence she had only been threatened with before. A similarity of events, accompanied by a strong similarity of conduct, seems to justify our expectations that the catastrophe will not be very different. But, after all, the designs of Providence are inscrutable, and, as in the case of individuals, so in that of nations, the same causes do not always produce the same effects. The country indeed cannot be saved in its present state of profligacy and profaneness, but may, nevertheless, be led to repentance by means we are little aware of, and at a time when we least expect it.

Our best love attends yourself and Mrs. Newton, and we rejoice that you feel no burthens but those you bear in common with the liveliest and most favored Christians. It is a happiness in poor Peggy's case, that she can swallow five shillings' worth of physic in a day, but a person must be in her case to be duly sensible of it.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, Dec. 19, 1781.

My dear William,—I dare say I do not enter exactly into your idea of a present theocracy, because mine amounts to no more than the common one, that all mankind, though few are really aware of it, act under a providential direction, and that a gracious superintendence in particular is the lot of those who trust in God. Thus I think respecting individuals, and with respect to the kingdoms of the earth, that, perhaps, by his own immediate operation, though more probably by the intervention of angels, (vide Daniel,) the great Governor manages and rules them, assigns them their origin, duration, and end, appoints them prosperity or adversity, glory or disgrace, as their virtue or their vices, their regard to the dictates of conscience and his word, or their prevailing neglect of both, may indicate and require. But in this persuasion, as I said, I do not at all deviate from the general opinion of those who believe a Providence, at least who have a scriptural belief of it. I suppose, therefore, you mean something more, and shall be glad to be more particularly informed.

I see but one feature in the face of our national concerns that pleases me:—the war with America, it seems, is to be conducted on a different plan. This is something, when a long series of measures, of a certain description, has proved unsuccessful, the adoption of others is at least pleasing, as it encourages a hope that they may possibly prove wiser and more effectual: but, indeed, without discipline, all is lost. Pitt himself could have done nothing with such tools; but he would not have been so betrayed; he would have made the traitors answer with their heads for their cowardice or supineness, and their punishment would have made survivors active. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney. The shortest day, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I might easily make this

* Private correspondence.

letter a continuation of my last, another national miscarriage having furnished me with a fresh illustration of the remarks we have both been making. Mr. S——,* who has most obligingly supplied me with franks throughout my whole concern with Johnson, accompanied the last parcel he sent me with a note dated from the House of Commons, in which he seemed happy to give me the earliest intelligence of the capture of the French transports by Admiral Kempenfelt, and of a close engagement between the two fleets, so much to be expected. This note was written on Monday, and reached me by Wednesday's post; but, alas! the same post brought us the newspaper that informed us of his being forced to fly before a much superior enemy, and glad to take shelter in the port he had left so lately. This event, I suppose, will have worse consequences than the mere disappointment; will furnish Opposition, as all our ill success has done, with the fuel of dissention, and with the means of thwarting and perplexing administration. Thus, all we purchase with the many millions expended yearly is distress to ourselves, instead of our enemies, and domestic quarrels instead of victories abroad. It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and, in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. They make us reel and stagger indeed, but the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees. That fall would save us; but, if we fall upon our side at last, we are undone. So much for politics.

I enclose a few lines on a thought which struck me yesterday.† If you approve of them, you know what to do with them. I should think they might occupy the place of an introduction, and should call them by that name, if I did not judge the name I have given them necessary for the information of the reader. A flatting-mill is not met with in every street, and my book will, perhaps fall into the hands of many who do not know that such a mill was ever invented. It happened to me, however, to spend much of my time in one, when I was a boy, when I frequently amused myself with watching the operation I describe.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

The reader will admire the sublimity of the following letter in allusion to England and America.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.‡

Olney. The last day of 1781.

My dear Friend,—Yesterday's post, which brought me yours, brought me a packet from Johnson. We have reached the middle of the Mahometan Hog. By the way, your lines, which, when we had the pleasure of seeing you here, you said you would furnish him with, are not inserted in it. I did not recollect, till after I had finished the "Flatting-Mill," that it bore any affinity to the motto taken from Caraccioli. The resemblance, however, did not appear to me to give any impropriety to the verses, as the thought is much enlarged upon, and enlivened by the addition of a new comparison. But if it is not wanted, it is superfluous, and if superfluous, better omitted. I shall not bumble Johnson for finding fault with "Friendship," though I have a better opinion of it myself; but a poet is of all men the most unfit to be judge in his own cause. Partial to all his productions, he is always most partial to the youngest. But, as there is a sufficient quantity without it, let that sleep too. If I should live to write again, I may possibly take up that subject a second time, and clothe it in a different dress. It abounds with excellent matter, and much more than I could find room for in two or three pages.

I consider England and America as once one country. They were so, in respect of interest, intercourse, and affinity. A great earthquake has made a partition, and now the Atlantic Ocean flows between them. He that can drain that ocean, and shove the two shores together, so as to make them aptly coincide, and meet each other in every part, can unite them again. But this is a work for Omnipotence and nothing less than Omnipotence can heal the breach between us. This dispensation is evidently a scourge to England; but is it a blessing to America?* Time

* Mr. Smith, afterwards Lord Carrington.

† The lines alluded to are entitled "The Flatting-Mill, an Illustration."

‡ Private correspondence.

* Cowper, though a Whig, vindicates the American war, keenly as he censures the inefficiency with which it was conducted. The subject has now lost much of its interest, and is become rather a matter of historical record. Such is the influence of the lapse of time on the intenseness of political feeling! The conduct of France, at this crisis, is exhibited with a happy poignancy of wit.

> "True we have lost an empire—let it pass.
> True; we may thank the perfidy of France,
> That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
> With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
> And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state."
>
> *Task*, book ii.

Cowper subsequently raises the question how far the attainment of Independence was likely to exercise a salutary influence on the future prospects of America. He anticipates an unfavorable issue. Events, however, have not fulfilled this prediction. What country has made such rapid strides towards Imperial greatness? Where shall we find a more boundless extent of territory, a more rapid increase of population, or ampler resources for a commerce that promises to make the whole world tributary to its support? Besides, why should not the descendants prove worthy of their sires? Why should a great experiment in legislation and government suspend the natural course of political and moral causes? May the spiritual improvement of her religious privileges keep pace with the career of her national greatness! What we most apprehend for America is the danger of internal dissension. If corruption be the disease of monarchies, faction is the bane of republics. We add one more reflection, with sentiments of profound regret, and

may prove it one, but at present it does not seem to wear an aspect favorable to their privileges, either civil or religious. I cannot doubt the truth of Dr. W.'s assertion; but the French, who pay but little regard to treaties that clash with their convenience, without a treaty, and even in direct contradiction to verbal engagements, can easily pretend a claim to a country which they have both bled and paid for; and, if the validity of that claim be disputed, behold an army ready landed, and well-appointed, and in possession of some of the most fruitful provinces, prepared to prove it. A scourge is a scourge at one end only. A bundle of thunderbolts, such as you have seen in the talons of Jupiter's eagle, is at both ends equally tremendous, and can inflict a judgment upon the West, at the same moment that it seems to intend only the chastisement of the East.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

Dr. Johnson's celebrated work, "The Lives of the Poets," had at this time made its appearance, and some of the following letters refer to that subject.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan. 5, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Did I allow myself to plead the common excuse of idle correspondents, and esteem it a sufficient reason for not writing that I have nothing to write about, I certainly should not write now. But I have so often found, on similar occasions, when a great penury of matter has seemed to threaten me with an utter impossibility of hatching a letter, that nothing is necessary but to put pen to paper, and go on, in order to conquer all difficulties; that, availing myself of past experience, I now begin with the most assured persuasion that, sooner or later, one idea naturally suggesting another, I shall come to a most prosperous conclusion.

In the last "Review," I mean in the last but one, I saw Johnson's critique upon Prior and Pope. I am bound to acquiesce in his opinion of the latter, because it has always been my own. I could never agree with those who preferred him to Dryden, nor with others (I have known such, and persons of taste and discernment too) who could not allow him to be a poet at all. He was certainly a mechanical maker of verses, and, in every line he ever wrote, we see indubitable marks of most indefatigable industry and labor. Writers, who find it necessary to make such strenuous and painful exertions, are generally as phlegmatic as they are correct; but Pope was, in this respect, exempted from the common lot of authors of that class. With the unwearied application of a plodding Flemish painter, who draws a shrimp with the most minute exactness, he had all the genius of one of the first masters. Never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united. But I admire Dryden most, who has succeeded by mere dint of genius, and in spite of a laziness and carelessness almost peculiar to himself. His faults are numberless, and so are his beauties. His faults are those of a great man, and his beauties are such (at least sometimes) as Pope, with all his touching and retouching, could never equal. So far, therefore, I have no quarrel with Johnson. But I cannot subscribe to what he says of Prior. In the first place, though my memory may fail me, I do not recollect that he takes any notice of his Solomon, in my mind the best poem, whether we consider the subject of it or the execution, that he ever wrote.* In the next place, he condemns him for introducing Venus and Cupid into his love verses, and concludes it impossible his passion could be sincere, because when he would express it, he has recourse to fables. But, when Prior wrote, those deities were not so obsolete as they are at present. His co-temporary writers, and some that succeeded him, did not think them beneath their notice. Tibullus, in reality, disbelieved their existence as much as we do; yet Tibullus is allowed to be the prince of all poetical inamoratos, though he mentions them in almost every page. There is a fashion in these things which the Doctor seems to have forgotten. But what shall we say of his rusty-fusty remarks upon Henry and Emma? I agree with him, that, morally considered, both the knight and his lady are bad characters, and that each exhibits an example which ought not to be followed. The man dissembles in a way that would have justified the woman had she renounced him, and the woman resolves to follow him at the expense of delicacy, propriety, and even modesty itself. But when the critic calls it a dull dialogue, who but a critic will believe him? There are few readers of poetry of either sex in this country who cannot remember how that enchanting piece has bewitched them, who do not know that, instead of finding it tedious, they have been so delighted with the romantic turn of

borrow the muse of Cowper to convey our meaning and our wishes.

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No; dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him."

Task, book ii.

* This remark is inaccurate. Prior's Solomon is distinctly mentioned, though Johnson observes that it fails in exciting interest. His concluding remarks are, however, highly honorable to the merit of that work. "He that shall peruse it will be able to mark many passages, to which he may recur for instruction or delight; many from which the poet may learn to write, and the philosopher to reason."—*Life of Prior.*—EDITOR.

it as to have overlooked all its defects, and to have given it a consecrated place in their memories without ever feeling it a burthen. I wonder almost, that, as the bacchanals served Orpheus, the boys and girls do not tear this husky, dry commentator, limb from limb, in resentment of such an injury done to their darling poet. I admire Johnson as a man of great erudition and sense, but, when he sets himself up for a judge of writers upon the subject of love, a passion which I suppose he never felt in his life, he might as well think himself qualified to pronounce upon a treatise on horsemanship, or the art of fortification.

The next packet I receive will bring me, I imagine, the last proof-sheet of my volume, which will consist of about three hundred and fifty pages, honestly printed. My public *entree* therefore is not far distant.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Jan. 13, 1782.

My dear Friend,—I believe I did not thank you for your anecdotes, either foreign or domestic, in my last, therefore I do it now; and still feel myself, as I did at the time, truly obliged to you for them. More is to be learned from one matter of fact than from a thousand speculations. But alas! what course can Government take? I have heard (for I never made the experiment) that if a man grasp a red-hot iron with his naked hand, it will stick to him, so that he cannot presently disengage himself from it. Such are the colonies in the hands of administration. While they hold them they burn their fingers, and yet they must not quit them. I know not whether your sentiments and mine upon this part of the subject exactly coincide, but you will know when you understand what mine are. It appears to me that the King is bound, both by the duty he owes to himself and to his people, to consider himself, with respect to every inch of his territories, as a trustee deriving his interest in them from God, and invested with them by divine authority for the benefit of his subjects. As he may not sell them or waste them, so he may not resign them to an enemy, or transfer his right to govern them to any, not even to themselves, so long as it is possible for him to keep it. If he does, he betrays at once his own interest and that of his other dominions. It may be said, suppose Providence has ordained that they shall be wrested from him, how then? I answer, that cannot appear to be the case, till God's purpose is actually accomplished; and in the meantime the most probable prospect of such an event does not release him from his obligation to hold them to the last moment, forasmuch as adverse appearances are no infallible indication of God's designs, but may give place to more comfortable symptoms, when we least expect it. Viewing the thing in this light, if I sat on his Majesty's throne, I should be as obstinate as he,* because, if I quitted the contest while I had any means of carrying it on, I should never know that I had not relinquished what I might have retained, or be able to render a satisfactory answer to the doubts and inquiries of my own conscience.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan. 17, 1782.

My dear William,—I am glad we agree in our opinion of king critic,† and the writers on whom he has bestowed his animadversions. It is a matter of indifference to me whether I think with the world at large or not, but I wish my friends to be of my mind. The same work will wear a different appearance in the eyes of the same man, according to the different views with which he reads it; if merely for his amusement, his candor being in less danger of a twist from interest or prejudice, he is pleased with what is really pleasing, and is not over-curious to discover a blemish, because the exercise of a minute exactness is not consistent with his purpose. But if he once becomes a critic by trade, the case is altered. He must then, at any rate, establish, if he can, an opinion in every mind of his uncommon discernment, and his exquisite taste. This great end he can never accomplish by thinking in the track that has been beaten under the hoof of public judgment. He must endeavor to convince the world that their favorite authors have more faults than they are aware of, and such as they have never suspected. Having marked out a writer universally esteemed, whom he finds it for that very reason convenient to depreciate and traduce, he will overlook some of his beauties, he will faintly praise others, and in such a manner as to make thousands, more modest though quite as judicious as himself, question whether they are beauties at all. Can there be a stronger illustration of all that I have said than the severity of Johnson's remarks upon Prior—I might have said the injustice? His reputation as an author, who, with much labor indeed, but with admirable success, has embellished all his poems with the most charming ease, stood

* The retention of the American colonies was known to be a favorite project with George III.; but the sense of the nation was opposed to the war, and the expense and reverses attending its prosecution increased the public discontent.

† Dr. Johnson.

unshaken till Johnson thrust his head against it. And how does he attack him in this his principal fort? I cannot recollect his very words, but I am much mistaken indeed, if my memory fails me with respect to the purport of them. "His words," he says, "appear to be forced into their proper places. There indeed we find them, but find likewise that their arrangement has been the effect of constraint, and that without violence they would certainly have stood in a different order."* By your leave, most learned Doctor, this is the most disingenuous remark I ever met with, and would have come with a better grace from Curl or Dennis. Every man conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful experience, that the familiar style is of all styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic, to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior; many have imitated his excellence in this particular, but the best copies have fallen far short of the original. And now to tell us, after we and our fathers have admired him for it so long, that he is an easy writer indeed, but that his ease has an air of stiffness in it; in short, that his ease is not ease, but only something like it, what is it but a self-contradiction, an observation that grants what it is just going to deny, and denies what it has just granted, in the same sentence, and in the same breath?—But I have filled the greatest part of my sheet with a very uninteresting subject. I will only say that, as a nation, we are not much indebted, in point of poetical credit, to this too sagacious and unmerciful judge; and that, for myself in particular, I have reason to rejoice that he entered upon and exhausted the labors of his office, before my poor volume could possibly become an object of them.

[That Johnson, in his "Lives of the Poets," has exhibited many instances of erroneous criticism, and that he sometimes censures where he might have praised, is we believe very generally admitted. His treatment of Swift, Gay, Prior, and Gray, has excited regret; and Milton, though justly extolled as a sublime poet, is lashed as a republican, with unrelenting severity.† Few will concur in Johnson's remarks on Gray's celebrated "Progress of Poetry;" and Murphy, in speaking of his critique on the well-known and admired opening of "The Bard,"

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king," &c.,

expresses a wish that it had been blotted out.* But Johnson was the Jupiter Tonans of literature, and not unfrequently hurls his thunder and darts his lightning with an air of conscious superiority, which, though it awakens terror by its power, does not always command respect for its judgment.

With all these deductions, the "Lives of the Poets" is a work abounding in inimitable beauties, and is a lasting memorial of Johnson's fame. It has been justly characterized as "the most brilliant, and, certainly, the most popular, of all his writings."† The most splendid passage, among many that might be

* The language in the original is as follows: "His expression has every mark of laborious study; the line seldom seems to have been formed at once; the words did not come till they were called, and were then put by constraint into their places, where they do their duty, but do it sullenly."—See *Lives of the Poets*.

† The severity of Johnson's strictures on Milton, in his Lives of the Poets, awakened a keen sense of indignation in the breast of Cowper, which he has recorded in the marginal remarks, written in his own copy of that work. They are characteristic of the generous ardor of his mind, in behalf of a man whose political views, however strong, were at least sincere and conscientious; and the splendor of whose name ought to have dissipated the animosities of party feeling. From these curious and interesting comments we extract the following:—

Johnson—"I know not any of the Articles which seem to thwart his opinions, but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, roused his indignation." *Cowper*—"Candid."

Johnson—"Of these Italian testimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publish them before his poems; though he says he cannot be suspected but to have known that they were said, *Non tam de se, quam supra se*." *Cowper*—"He did well."

Johnson—"I have transcribed this title to show, by his contemptuous mention of Usher, that he had now adopted a puritanical savageness of manners." *Cowper*—"Why is it contemptuous? Especially, why is it savage?"

Johnson—"From this time it is observed, that he became an enemy to the Presbyterians, whom he had favored before. He that changes his party by his humor, is not more virtuous than he that changes it by his interest. He loves himself rather than truth." *Cowper*—"You should have proved that he was influenced by his humor."

Johnson—"It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own house, when they were distressed, with other Royalists." *Cowper*—"Strong proof of a temper both forgiving and liberal."

Johnson—"But, as faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it may find him, Milton is *suspected* of having interpolated the book called 'Ikon Basilike,' &c." *Cowper*—"A strange proof of your proposition!"

Johnson—"I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously paid to this great man by his biographers. Every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honored by his presence." *Cowper*—"They have all paid him more than you."

Johnson—"If he considered the Latin Secretary as exercising any of the powers of Government, he that had showed authority either with the Parliament or with Cromwell, might have forborne to talk very loudly of his honesty." *Cowper*—"He might if he acted on principle, talk as loudly as he pleased."

Johnson—"This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion." *Cowper*—"Brute!"

Johnson—"That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought women made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion." *Cowper*—"And could you write this without blushing? *Os honinus!*"

Johnson—"Such is his malignity, that hell grows darker at his frown." *Cowper*—"And at THINE!"

* See Murphy's "Essay on the Genius of Dr. Johnson."

† Ibid.

quoted, is perhaps the eloquent comparison instituted between the relative merits of Pope and Dryden. As Cowper alludes to this critique with satisfaction, we insert an extract from it, to gratify those who are not familiar with its existence. Speaking of Dryden, Johnson observes: "His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope." Again: "Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller."

"Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigor Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems."

He concludes this brilliant comparison in the following words. "If the flights of Dryden, therefore, are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing; if of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight."*

We now insert the sequel of the preceding letter to Mr. Unwin.]

You have already furnished John's memory with by far the greatest part of what a parent would wish to store it with. If all that is merely trivial, and all that has an immoral tendency, were expunged from our English poets, how would they shrink, and how would some of them completely vanish! I believe there are some of Dryden's Fables, which he would find very entertaining; they are for the most part fine compositions, and not above his apprehension; but Dryden has written few things that are not blotted here and there with an unchaste allusion, so that you must pick his way for him, lest he should tread in the dirt. You did not mention Milton's "Allegro" and "Penseroso," which I remember being so charmed with when a boy, that I was never weary of them. There are even passages in the paradisiacal part of "Paradise Lost," which he might study with advantage. And to teach him, as you can, to deliver some of the fine orations made in the Pandæmonium, and those between Satan, Ithuriel, and Zephon, with emphasis, dignity, and propriety, might be of great use to him hereafter. The sooner the ear is formed, and the organs of speech are accustomed to the various inflections of the voice, which the rehearsal of those passages demands, the better. I should think too that Thomson's "Seasons" might afford him some useful lessons. At least they would have a tendency to give his mind an observing and a philosophical turn. I do not forget that he is but a child, but I remember that he is a child favored with talents superior to his years. We were much pleased with his remarks on your alms-giving, and doubt not but it will be verified with respect to the two guineas you sent us, which have made four Christian people happy. Ships I have none, nor have touched a pencil these three years; if ever I take it up again, which I rather suspect I shall not (the employment requiring stronger eyes than mine,) it shall be at John's service.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

* See "Life of Pope."

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Jan. 31, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Having thanked you for a barrel of very fine oysters, I should have nothing more to say, if I did not determine to say everything that may happen to occur. The political world affords no very agreeable subjects at present, nor am I sufficiently conversant with it to do justice to so magnificent a theme, if it did. A man that lives as I do, whose chief occupation at this season of the year, is to walk ten times in a day from the fire-side to his cucumber frame and back again, cannot show his wisdom more, if he has any wisdom to show, than by leaving the mysteries of government to the management of persons in point of situation and information, much better qualified for the business. Suppose not, however, that I am perfectly an unconcerned spectator, or that I take no interest at all in the affairs of the country; far from it—I read the news—I see that things go wrong in every quarter. I meet, now and then, with an account of some disaster that seems to be the indisputable progeny of treachery, cowardice, or a spirit of faction; I recollect that in those happier days, when you and I could spend our evening in enumerating victories and acquisitions, that seemed to follow each other in a continued series,

* Private correspondence.

there was some pleasure in hearing a politician; and a man might talk away upon so entertaining a subject, without danger of becoming tiresome to others, or incurring weariness himself. When poor Bob White brought me the news of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demolished Conflans, I was still more transported. But nothing could express my rapture, when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec. I am not, therefore, I suppose, destitute of true patriotism; but the course of public events has, of late, afforded me no opportunity to exert it. I cannot rejoice, because I see no reason; and I will not murmur, because for that I can find no good one. And let me add, he that has seen both sides of fifty, has lived to little purpose, if he has not other views of the world than he had when he was much younger. He finds, if he reflects at all, that it will be to the end what it has been from the beginning, a shifting, uncertain, fluctuating scene; that nations, as well as individuals, have their seasons of infancy, youth, and age. If he be an Englishman, he will observe that ours, in particular, is affected with every symptom of decay, and is already sunk into a state of decrepitude. I am reading Mrs. Macaulay's History. I am not quite such a superannuated simpleton as to suppose that mankind were wiser or much better when I was young than they are now. But I may venture to assert, without exposing myself to the charge of dotage, that the men whose integrity, courage, and wisdom, broke the bands of tyranny, established our constitution upon its true basis, and gave a people overwhelmed with the scorn of all countries an opportunity to emerge into a state of the highest respect and estimation, make a better figure in history than any of the present day are likely to do, when their petty harangues are forgotten, and nothing shall survive but the remembrance of the views and motives with which they made them.

My dear friend, I have written at random, in every sense, neither knowing what sentiments I should broach when I began, nor whether they would accord with yours. Excuse a rustic, if he errs on such a subject, and believe me sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Feb. 2, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Though I value your correspondence highly on its own account, I certainly value it the more in consideration of the many difficulties under which you carry it on. Having so many other engagements, and engagements so much more worthy your attention, I ought to esteem it, as I do, a singular proof of your friendship that you so often make an opportunity to bestow a letter upon me; and this not only because mine, which I write in a state of mind not very favorable to religious contemplations, are never worth your reading, but especially because while you consult my gratification, and endeavor to amuse my melancholy, your thoughts are forced out of the only channel in which they delight to flow, and constrained into another so different, and so little interesting to a mind like yours, that, but for me, and for my sake, they would perhaps never visit it. Though I should be glad therefore to hear from you every week, I do not complain that I enjoy that privelege but once in a fortnight, but am rather happy to be indulged in it so often.

I thank you for the jog you gave Johnson's elbow; communicated from him to the printer, it has produced me two more sheets, and two more will bring the business, I suppose, to a conclusion. I sometimes feel such a perfect indifference, with respect to the public opinion of my book, that I am ready to flatter myself no censure of reviewers or other critical readers would occasion me the smallest disturbance. But not feeling myself constantly possessed of this desirable apathy, I am sometimes apt to suspect that it is not altogether sincere, or at least that I may lose it just at the moment when I may happen most to want it. Be it, however, as it may, I am still persuaded that it is not in their power to mortify me much. I have intended well, and performed to the best of my ability: so far was right, and this is a boast of which they cannot rob me. If they condemn my poetry, I must even say with Cervantes, "Let them do better if they can!"—if my doctrine, they judge that which they do not understand; I shall except to the jurisdiction of the court, and plead *Coram non judice*. Even Horace could say he should neither be the plumper for the praise nor the leaner for the commendation of his readers; and it will prove me wanting to myself indeed, if, supported by so many sublimer considerations than he was master of, I cannot sit loose to popularity, which, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and is equally out of our command. If you, and two or three more such as you are, say, well done, it ought to give me more contentment than if I could earn Churchill's laurels, and by the same means.

I wrote to Lord Dartmouth to apprise him of my intended present, and have received a most affectionate and obliging answer.

I am rather pleased that you have adopted other sentiments respecting our intended present to the critical Doctor.* I allow him to be a man, of gigantic talents and most

* Dr. Johnson.

profound learning, nor have I any doubts about the universality of his knowledge: but, by what I have seen of his animadversions on the poets, I feel myself much disposed to question, in many instances, either his candor or his taste. He finds fault too often, like a man that, having sought it very industriously, is at last obliged to stick it on a pin's point, and look at it through a microscope; and, I am sure, I could easily convict him of having denied many beauties and overlooked more. Whether his judgment be in itself defective, or whether it be warped by collateral considerations, a writer upon such subjects as I have chosen would probably find but little mercy at his hands.

No winter, since we knew Olney, has kept us more confined than the present. We have not more than three times escaped into the fields since last autumn. Man, a changeable creature in himself, seems to subsist best in a state of variety, as his proper element:—a melancholy man, at least, is apt to grow sadly weary of the same walks and the same pales, and to find that the same scene will suggest the same thoughts perpetually.

Though I have spoken of the utility of changes, we neither feel nor wish for any in our friendships, and consequently stand just where we did with respect to your whole self.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Feb. 9, 1782.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for Mr. Lowth's verses. They are so good that, had I been present when he spoke them, I should have trembled for the boy, lest the man should disappoint the hopes such early genius had given birth to. It is not common to see so lively a fancy so correctly managed, and so free from irregular exuberance, at so unexperienced an age, fruitful, yet not wanton, and gay without being tawdry. When school-boys write verse, if they have any fire at all, it generally spends itself in flashes and transient sparks, which may indeed suggest an expectation of something better hereafter, but deserve not to be much commended for any real merit of their own. Their wit is generally forced and false, and their sublimity, if they affect any, bombast. I remember well when it was thus with me, and when a turgid, noisy, unmeaning speech in a tragedy, which I should now laugh at, afforded me raptures, and filled me with wonder. It is not in general till reading and observation have settled the taste that we can give the prize to the best writing in preference to the worst. Much less are we able to execute what is good ourselves. But Lowth seems to have stepped into excellence at once, and to have gained by intuition what we little folks are happy if we can learn at last, after much labor of our own and instruction of others. The compliments he pays to the memory of King Charles he would probably now retract, though he be a bishop, and his majesty's zeal for episcopacy was one of the causes of his ruin. An age or two must pass before some characters can be properly understood. The spirit of party employs itself in veiling their faults and ascribing to them virtues which they never possessed. See Charles's face drawn by Clarendon, and it is a handsome portrait. See it more justly exhibited by Mrs. Macaulay, and it is deformed to a degree that shocks us. Every feature expresses cunning, employing itself in the maintaining of tyranny; and dissimulation, pretending itself an advocate for truth.

My letters have already apprized you of that close and intimate connexion that took place between the lady you visited in Queen Anne's street and us.* Nothing could be more promising, though sudden in the commencement. She treated us with as much unreservedness of communication as if we had been born in the same house and educated together. At her departure, she herself proposed a correspondence, and because writing does not agree with your mother, proposed a correspondence with me. By her own desire, I wrote to her under the assumed relation of brother, and she to me as my sister.

I thank you for the search you have made after my intended motto, but I no longer need it.

Our love is always with yourself and family.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Lady Austen returned in the following summer to the house of her sister, situated on the brow of a hill, the foot of which is washed by the river Ouse, as it flows between Clifton and Olney. Her benevolent ingenuity was exerted to guard the spirit of Cowper from sinking again into that hypochondriacal dejection to which, even in her company, he still sometimes discovered an alarming tendency. To promote his occupation and amusement, she furnished him with a small portable printing press, and he gratefully sent her the following verses printed by himself, and enclosed in a billet that alludes to the occasion on which they were composed—a very unseasonable flood, that interrupted the communication between Clifton and Olney.

To watch the storms, and hear the sky
Give all our almanacks the lie;
To shake with cold, and see the plains
In autumn drown'd with wintry rains;

* Lady Austen.

'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
And wish myself a Dutch mynheer;
I then should have no need of wit;
For lumpish Hollander unfit!
Nor should I then repine at mud,
Or meadows deluged with a flood:
But in a hog live well content,
And find it just my element;
Should be a clod, and not a man;
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
With charitable aid to drag
My mind out of its proper quag;
Should have the genius of a boor,
And no ambition to have more.

My dear Sister,—You see my beginning—I do not know but in time, I may proceed even to the printing of halfpenny ballads—excuse the coarseness of my paper—I wasted such a quantity before I could accomplish anything legible that I could not afford finer. I intend to employ an ingenious mechanic of the town to make me a longer case: for you may observe that my lines turn up their tails like Dutch mastiffs, so difficult do I find it to make the two halves exactly coincide with each other.

We wait with impatience for the departure of this unseasonable flood. We think of you, and talk of you, but we can do no more till the waters shall subside. I do not think our correspondence should drop because we are within a mile of each other. It is but an imaginary approximation, the flood having in reality as effectually parted us as if the British channel rolled between us.

Yours, my dear sister, with Mrs. Unwin's best love, W. C.

A flood that precluded him from the conversation of such an enlivening friend was to Cowper a serious evil; but he was happily relieved from the apprehension of such disappointment in future, by seeing the friend so pleasing and so useful to him very comfortably settled as his next-door neighbor. An event so agreeable to the poet was occasioned by circumstances of a painful nature, related in a letter to Mr. Unwin, which, though it bears no date of month or year, seems properly to claim insertion in this place.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear William,—The modest terms in which you express yourself on the subject of Lady Austen's commendation embolden me to add my suffrage to hers, and to confirm it by assuring you that I think her just and well-founded in her opinion of you. The compliment indeed glances at myself: for, were you less than she accounts you, I ought not to afford you that place in my esteem which you have held so long. My own sagacity, therefore, and discernment are not a little concerned upon the occasion, for either you resemble the picture, or I have strangely mistaken my man, and formed an erroneous judgment of his character. With respect to your face and figure, indeed, there I leave the ladies to determine, as being naturally best qualified to decide the point; but whether you are perfectly the man of sense and the gentleman, is a question in which I am as much interested as they, and which, you being my friend, I am of course prepared to settle in your favor. The lady (whom, when you know her as well, you will love her as much, as we do) is, and has been, during the last fortnight, a part of our family. Before she was perfectly restored to health, she returned to Clifton. Soon after she came back, Mr. Jones had occasion to go to London. No sooner was he gone than the *chateau*, being left without a garrison, was besieged as regularly as the night came on. Villains were both heard and seen in the garden, and at the doors and windows. The kitchen window in particular was attempted, from which they took a complete pane of glass, exactly opposite to the iron by which it was fastened, but providentially the window had been nailed to the wood-work in order to keep it close, and that the air might be excluded; thus they were disappointed, and, being discovered by the maid, withdrew. The ladies, being worn out with continual watching and repeated alarms, were at last prevailed upon to take refuge with us. Men furnished with firearms were put into the house, and the rascals, having intelligence of this circumstance, beat a retreat. Mr. Jones returned; Mrs. Jones and Miss Green, her daughter, left us, but Lady Austen's spirits having been too much disturbed to be able to repose in a place where she had been so much terrified, she was left behind. She remains with us till her lodgings at the vicarage can be made ready for her reception. I have now sent you what has occured of moment in our history since my last.

I say amen with all my heart to your observation on religious characters. Men who profess themselves adepts in mathematical knowledge, in astronomy, or jurisprudence, are generally as well qualified as they would appear. The reason may be, that they are always liable to detection should they attempt to impose upon mankind, and therefore take care to be what they pretend. In religion alone a profession is often slightly taken up and slovenly carried on, because, forsooth, candor and charity require us to hope the best, and to judge favorably of our neighbor, and because it is easy to deceive the ignorant, who are a great majority, upon this subject. Let a man attach himself to a particular party, contend furiously for what are properly called evangelical doctrines, and enlist himself under the banner of some

popular preacher, and the business is done. Behold a Christian! a saint! a phœnix! In the meantime, perhaps, his heart and his temper, and even his conduct, are unsanctified; possibly less exemplary than those of some avowed infidels. No matter—he can talk—he has the Shibboleth of the true church—the Bible in his pocket, and a head well stored with notions. But the quiet, humble, modest, and peaceable person, who is in his practice what the other is only in his profession, who hates a noise, and therefore makes none, who, knowing the snares that are in the world, keeps himself as much out of it as he can, and never enters it but when duty calls, and even then with fear and trembling—is the Christian, that will always stand highest in the estimation of those who bring all characters to the test of true wisdom, and judge of the tree by its fruit.

You are desirous of visiting the prisoners; you wish to administer to their necessities, and to give them instruction. This task you will undertake, though you expect to encounter many things in the performance of it that will give you pain. Now this I can understand—you will not listen to the sensibilities that distress yourself, but to the distresses of others. Therefore, when I meet with one of the specious praters above mentioned, I will send him to Stock, that by your diffidence he may be taught a lesson of modesty; by your generosity, a little feeling for others; and by your general conduct, in short, to chatter less and do more.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Feb. 16, 1782.

Carraccioli says—"There is something very bewitching in authorship, and that he who has once written will write again." It may be so; I can subscribe to the former part of his assertion from my own experience, having never found an amusement, among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the future (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times) had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason, I wish, and have often wished, since the fit left me, that it would seize me again; but hitherto I have wished it in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them. Whether it is thus with other writers or not I am ignorant, but I should suppose my case in this respect a little peculiar. The voluminous writers, at least, whose vein of fancy seems always to have been rich in proportion to their occasions, cannot have been so unlike and so unequal to themselves. There is this difference between my poetship and the generality of *them*—they have been ignorant how much they have stood indebted to an Almighty power for the exercise of those talents they have supposed their own. Whereas I know, and know most perfectly, and am perhaps to be taught it to the last, that my power to think, whatever it be, and consequently my power to compose, is, as much as my outward form, afforded to me by the same hand that makes me in any respect to differ from a brute. This lesson, if not constantly inculcated, might perhaps be forgotten, or at least too slightly remembered.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Feb. 24, 1782.

My dear Friend,—If I should receive a letter from you to-morrow, you must still remember, that I am not in your debt, having paid you by anticipation. Knowing that you take an interest in my publication, and that you have waited for it with some impatience, I write to inform you, that, if it is possible for a printer to be punctual, I shall come forth on the first of March. I have ordered two copies to Stock; one for Mr. John Unwin. It is possible, after all, that my book may come forth without a preface. Mr. Newton has written (he could indeed write no other) a very sensible, as well as a very friendly one: and it is printed. But the bookseller, who knows him well, and esteems him highly, is anxious to have it cancelled, and, with my consent first obtained, has offered to negotiate that matter with the author. He judges, that, though it would serve to recommend the volume to the religious, it would disgust the profane, and that there is in reality no need of a preface at all. I have found Johnson a very judicious man on other occasions, and am therefore willing that he should determine for me upon this.

There are but few persons to whom I present my book. The Lord Chancellor is one. I enclose in a packet I send by this post to Johnson a letter to his lordship, which will accompany the volume; and to you I enclose a copy of it, because I know you will have a friendly curiosity to see it. An author is an important character. Whatever his merits may be, the mere circumstance of authorship warrants his approach to persons whom otherwise perhaps he could hardly address without being deemed impertinent. He can do me no good. If I should happen to do him a little, I shall be a greater man than

he. I have ordered a copy likewise to Mr. Smith.

Yours, W. C.

TO LORD THURLOW.

(ENCLOSED TO MR. UNWIN.)

Olney, Bucks, Feb. 25, 1782.

My Lord,—I make no apology for what I account a duty. I should offend against the cordiality of our former friendship should I send a volume into the world, and forget how much I am bound to pay my particular respects to your lordship upon that occasion. When we parted, you little thought of hearing from me again; and I as little that I should live to write to you, still less that I should wait on you in the capacity of an author.

Among the pieces I have the honor to send there is one for which I must entreat your pardon; I mean that of which your lordship is the subject. The best excuse I can make is, that it flowed almost spontaneously from the affectionate remembrance of a connexion that did me so much honor.

As to the rest, their merits, if they have any, and their defects, which are probably more than I am aware of, will neither of them escape your notice. But where there is much discernment, there is generally much candor; and I commit myself into your lordship's hands with the less anxiety, being well acquainted with yours.

If my first visit, after so long an interval, should prove neither a troublesome nor a dull one, but especially, if not altogether an unprofitable one, *omne tulit punctum*.

I have the honor to be, though with very different impressions of some subjects, yet with the same sentiments of affection and esteem as ever, your lordship's faithful and most obedient, humble servant,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Feb, 1782.

My dear Friend,—I enclose Johnson's letter upon the subject of the Preface, and would send you my reply to it, if I had kept a copy. This however was the purport of it. That Mr. ——, whom I described as you described him to me, had made a similar objection, but that, being willing to hope that two or three pages of sensible matter, well expressed, might possibly go down, though of a religious cast, I was resolved to believe him mistaken, and to pay no regard to it. That *his* judgment, however, who by his occupation is bound to understand what will promote the sale of a book, and what will hinder it, seemed to deserve more attention. That therefore, according to his own offer, written on a small slip of paper now lost, I should be obliged to him if he would state his difficulties to you; adding, I need not inform *him*, who is so well acquainted with you, that he would find you easy to be persuaded to sacrifice, if necessary, what you had written, to the interests of the book. I find he has had an interview with you upon the occasion, and your behavior in it has verified my prediction. What course he determines upon, I do not know, nor am I at all anxious about it. It is impossible for me, however, to be so insensible of your kindness in writing the Preface, as not to be desirous of defying all contingencies, rather than entertain a wish to suppress it. It will do me honor in the eyes of those whose good opinion is indeed an honor; and if it hurts me in the estimation of others, I cannot help it; the fault is neither yours, nor mine, but theirs. If a minister's is a more splendid character than a poet's, and I think nobody that understands their value can hesitate in deciding that question, then undoubtedly the advantage of having our names united in the same volume is all on my side.

We thank you for the Fast-sermon. I had not read two pages before I exclaimed—the man has read Expostulation. But though there is a strong resemblance between the two pieces, in point of matter, and sometimes the very same expressions are to be met with, yet I soon recollected that, on such a theme, a striking coincidence of both might happen without a wonder. I doubt not that it is the production of an honest man, it carries with it an air of sincerity and zeal that is not easily counterfeited. But, though I can see no reason why kings should not hear sometimes of their faults as well as other men, I think I see many good ones why they should not be reproved so publicly. It can hardly be done with that respect which is due to their office, on the part of the author, or without encouraging a spirit of unmannerly censure in his readers. His majesty too, perhaps, might answer—my own personal feelings, and offences. I am ready to confess, but were I to follow your advice, and cashier the profligate from my service, where must I seek men of faith and true Christian piety, qualified by nature and by education to succeed them? Business must be done, men of business alone can do it, and good men are rarely found, under that description. When Nathan reproved David, he did not employ a herald, or accompany his charge with the sound of the trumpet; nor can I think the writer of this sermon, quite justifiable in exposing the king's faults in the sight of the people.

Your answer respecting Ætna is quite satisfactory, and gives me much pleasure. I hate altering, though I never refuse the task

when propriety seems to enjoin it; and an alteration in this instance, if I am not mistaken, would have been singularly difficult. Indeed, when a piece has been finished two or three years, and an author finds occasion to amend or make an addition to it, it is not easy to fall upon the very vein from which he drew his ideas in the first instance, but either a different turn of thought or expression will betray the patch, and convince a reader of discernment that it has been cobbled and varnished.

Our love to you both, and to the young Euphrosyne; the old lady of that name being long since dead, if she pleases, she shall fill her vacant office, and be my muse hereafter.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 6, 1782.

Is peace the nearer because our patriots have resolved that it is desirable? Will the victory they have gained in the House of Commons be attended with any other? Do they expect the same success on other occasions, and, having once gained a majority, are they to be the majority forever?* These are the questions we agitate by the fire-side in an evening, without being able to come to any certain conclusion, partly, I suppose, because the subject is in itself uncertain, and partly, because we are not furnished with the means of understanding it. I find the politics of times past more intelligible than those of the present. Time has thrown light upon what was obscure, and decided what was ambiguous. The characters of great men, which are always mysterious while they live, are ascertained by the faithful historian, and sooner or later receive the wages of fame or infamy, according to their true deserts. How have I seen sensible and learned men burn incense to the memory of Oliver Cromwell, ascribing to him, as the greatest hero in the world, the dignity of the British empire, during the interregnum. A century passed before that idol, which seemed to be of gold, was proved to be a wooden one. The fallacy, however, was at length detected, and the honor of that detection has fallen to the share of a woman. I do not know whether you have read Mrs. Macaulay's history of that period. She has handled him more roughly that the Scots did at the battle of Dunbar. He would have thought it little worth his while to have broken through all obligations divine and human, to have wept crocodile's tears, and wrapped himself up in the obscurity of speeches that nobody could understand, could he have foreseen that, in the ensuing century, a lady's scissors would clip his laurels close, and expose his naked villainy to the scorn of all posterity. This however has been accomplished, and so effectually, that I suppose it is not in the power of the most artificial management to make them grow again. Even the sagacious of mankind are blind, when Providence leaves them to be deluded: so blind, that a tyrant shall be mistaken for a true patriot: true patriots (such were the long Parliament) shall be abhorred as tyrants, and almost a whole nation shall dream that they have the full enjoyment of liberty, for years after such a complete knave as Oliver shall have stolen it completely from them. I am indebted for all this show of historical knowledge to Mr. Bull, who has lent me five volumes of the work I mention. I was willing to display it while I have it: in a twelvemonth's time, I shall remember almost nothing of the matter. W. C.

* The nation was growing weary of the American war, especially since the surrender of Lord Cornwallis's army at York Town, and the previous capture of General Burgoyne's at Saratoga. The ministry at this time were frequently outvoted, and Lord North's administration was ultimately dissolved.

It has been the lot of Cromwell to be praised too little or too much. Of his political delinquencies, and gross hypocrisy, there can be only one opinion. But those who are conversant with that period well know how the genius of Mazarine, the minister of Louis XIII., was awed by the decision and boldness of Cromwell's character; that Spain and Holland experienced a signal humiliation, and that the victories of Admiral Blake at that crisis are among the most brilliant records of our naval fame. It was in allusion to these triumphs that Waller remarks, in his celebrated panegyric on the Lord Protector,

"The seas our own, and now all nations greet,
With bending sails, each vessel of our fleet.
Your power extends as far as winds can blow,
Or swelling sails upon the globe may go."*

We add the following anecdote recorded of Waller, though it is probably familiar to many of our readers. On Charles's restoration the poet presented that prince with a congratulatory copy of verses, when the king shortly afterwards observed, "You wrote better verses on Cromwell;" to which Waller replied, "Please your majesty, we poets always succeed better in fiction than in truth."

TO THE REV. WM. UNWIN.

Olney, March 7, 1782.

My dear Friend,—We have great pleasure in the contemplation of your northern journey, as it promises us a sight of you and

* Waller's Panegyric to my Lord Protector, 1654.

yours by the way, and are only sorry Miss Shuttleworth cannot be of the party. A line to ascertain the hour when we may expect you, by the next preceding post, will be welcome.

It is not much for my advantage that the printer delays so long to gratify your expectation. It is a state of mind that is apt to tire and disconcert us; and there are but few pleasures that make us amends for the pain of repeated disappointment. I take it for granted you have not received the volume, not having received it myself, nor indeed heard from Johnson, since he fixed the first of the month for its publication.

What a medley are our public prints! Half the page filled with the ruin of the country, and the other half filled with the vices and pleasures of it—here is an island taken, and there a new comedy—here an empire lost, and there an Italian opera, or a lord's rout on a Sunday!

"May it please your lordship! I am an Englishman, and must stand or fall with the nation. Religion, its true palladium, has been stolen away; and it is crumbling into dust. Sin ruins us, the sins of the great especially, and of their sins especially the violation of the sabbath, because it is naturally productive of all the rest. If you wish well to our arms, and would be glad to see the kingdom emerging from her ruins, pay more respect to an ordinance that deserves the deepest! I do not say, pardon this short remonstrance! The concern I feel for my country, and the interest I have in its prosperity, give me a right to make it. I am, &c."

Thus one might write to his lordship, and (I suppose) might be as profitably employed in whistling the tune of an old ballad.

I have no copy of the Preface, nor do I know at present how Johnson and Mr. Newton have settled it. In the matter of it there was nothing offensively peculiar. But it was thought too pious.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

It is impossible to read this passage without very painful emotions. How low must have been the state of religion at that period, when the introduction of a Preface to the Poems of Cowper, by the Rev. John Newton, was sufficient to endanger their popularity. We are at the same time expressly assured, that there was nothing in the Preface offensively peculiar; and that the only charge alleged against it was that of its being "too pious." What a melancholy picture does this single fact present of the state of religion in those days; and with what sentiments of gratitude ought we to hail the great moral revolution that has since occurred! Witness the assemblage of so many Christian charities, our Bible, Missionary, Jewish, and Tract Societies, which, to use the emphatic language of Burke, "like so many non-conducors, avert the impending wrath of heaven!" Witness the increasing instances of rank ennobled by piety, and consecrated to its advancement! Witness too the entrance of religion into our seats of learning, and into some of our public schools, thus presenting the delightful spectacle of classic taste and knowledge in alliance with heavenly wisdom. To these causes of pious gratitude we may add the revival of religion among our clergy, and generally among the ministers of the sanctuary, till we are constrained to exclaim, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"* We trust that we are indulging in no vain expectation, when we express our firm persuasion, that the dawn of a brighter day is arrived; and though we see, both at home and on the continent of Europe, much over which piety may weep and tremble, while idolatry and superstition spread their thick veil of darkness over the largest portion of the globe, still, notwithstanding all these impediments and discouragements, we believe that the materials for the moral amelioration of mankind are all prepared; and that nothing but the fire of the Eternal Spirit is wanting, to kindle them into flame and splendor.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 14, 1782.

My dear Friend,—I can only repeat what I said some time since, that the world is grown more foolish and careless than it was when I had the honor of knowing it. Though your Preface was of a serious cast, it was yet free from everything that might with propriety expose it to the charge of Methodism, being guilty of no offensive peculiarities, nor containing any of those obnoxious doctrines at which the world is apt to be angry, and which we must give her leave to be angry at, because we know she cannot help it. It asserted nothing more than every rational creature must admit to be true—"that divine and earthly things can no longer stand in competition with each other, in the judgment of any man, than while he continues ignorant of their respective value; and that the moment the eyes are opened, the latter are always cheerfully relinquished for the sake of the former." Now I do most certainly remember the time when such a proposition as this would have been at least supportable, and when it would not have spoiled the market of any volume to which it had been prefixed; ergo—the times are altered for the worse.

I have reason to be very much satisfied with my publisher—he marked such lines as

* Isaiah lii. 7.

did not please him, and, as often as I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. You will accordingly find, at least if you recollect how they stood in the MS., that several passages are better for having undergone his critical notice. Indeed I know not where I could have found a bookseller who could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment; and as I find it is a fashion for modern bards to publish the names of the literati who have favored their works with a revisal, would myself most willingly have acknowledged my obligations to Johnson, and so I told him. I am to thank you likewise, and ought to have done it in the first place, for having recommended to me the suppression of some lines, which I am now more than ever convinced would at least have done me no honor.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, March 14, 1782.

My dear Friend,—As servant-maids, and such sort of folks, account a letter good for nothing, unless it begins with—This comes hoping you are well, as I am at this present: so I should be chargeable with a great omission, were I not to make frequent use of the following grateful exordium—Many thanks for a fine cod and oysters. Your bounty never arrived more seasonably. I had just been observing that, among other deplorable effects of the war, the scarcity of fish which it occasioned was severely felt at Olney; but your plentiful supply immediately reconciled me, though not to the war, yet to my small share in the calamities it produces.

I hope my bookseller has paid due attention to the order I gave him to furnish you with my books. The composition of those pieces afforded me an agreeable amusement at intervals, for about a twelvemonth; and I should be glad to devote the leisure hours of another twelvemonth to the same occupation; at least, if my lucubrations should meet with a favorable acceptance. But I cannot write when I would; and whether I shall find readers is a problem not yet decided. So the Muse and I are parted for the present.

I sent Lord Thurlow a volume, and the following letter with it, which I communicate because you will undoubtedly have some curiosity to see it.†

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, March 18, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Nothing has given me so much pleasure, since the publication of my volume, as your favorable opinion of it. It may possibly meet with acceptance from hundreds, whose commendation would afford me no other satisfaction than what I should find in the hope that it might do them good. I have some neighbors in this place, who say they like it; doubtless I had rather they should than that they should not, but I know them to be persons of no more taste in poetry than skill in the mathematics; their applause, therefore, is a sound that has no music in it for me. But my vanity was not so entirely quiescent when I read your friendly account of the manner it had affected *you*. It was tickled, and pleased, and told me in a pretty loud whisper, that others, perhaps, of whose taste and judgment I had a high opinion, would approve it too. As a giver of good counsel, I wish to please all; as an author, I am perfectly indifferent to the judgment of all, except the few who are indeed judicious. The circumstance, however, in your letter which pleased me most was, that you wrote in high spirits, and, though you said much, suppressed more, lest you should hurt my delicacy; my delicacy is obliged to you, but you observe it is not so squeamish but that, after it has feasted upon praise expressed, it can find a comfortable dessert in the contemplation of praise implied. I now feel as if I should be glad to begin another volume, but from the will to the power is a step too wide for me to take at present, and the season of the year brings with it so many avocations into the garden, where I am my own *fac-totum*, that I have little or no leisure for the quill. I should do myself much wrong, were I to omit mentioning the great complacency with which I read your narrative of Mrs. Unwin's smiles and tears; persons of much sensibility are always persons of taste; and a taste for poetry depends indeed upon that very article more than upon any other. If she had Aristotle by heart, I should not esteem her judgment so highly, were she defective in point of feeling, as I do and must esteem it, knowing her to have such feelings as Aristotle could not communicate, and as half the readers in the world are destitute of. This it is that makes me set so high a price upon your mother's opinion. She is a critic by nature and not by rule, and has a perception of what is good or bad in composition that I never knew deceive her, insomuch that when two sorts of expression have pleaded equally for the precedence in my own esteem, and I have referred, as in such cases I always did, the decision of the point to her, I never knew her at a loss for a just one.

Whether I shall receive any answer from his Chancellorship* or not, is at present *in ambiguo*, and will probably continue in the same state of ambiguity much longer. He is so busy a man, and at this time, if the papers

* Private correspondence.

† This letter has been inserted in the preceding pages.

* Lord Thurlow.

may be credited, so particularly busy, that I am forced to mortify myself with the thought, that both my book and my letter may be thrown into a corner, as too insignificant for a statesman's notice, and never found till his executor finds them. This affair, however, is neither at my *libitum* nor his. I have sent him the truth. He that put it into the heart of a certain eastern monarch to amuse himself, one sleepless night, with listening to the records of his kingdom, is able to give birth to such another occasion, and inspire his lordship with a curiosity to know what he has received from a friend he once loved and valued. If an answer comes, however, you shall not long be a stranger to the contents of it.

I have read your letter to their worships, and much approve of it. May it have the desired effect it ought! If not, still you have acted a humane and becoming part, and the poor aching toes and fingers of the prisoners will not appear in judgment against you. I have made a slight alteration in the last sentence, which perhaps you will not disapprove.

Yours ever, W. C.

The conclusion of the preceding letter alludes to an application made by Mr. Unwin to the magistrates, for some warmer clothing for the prisoners in Chelmsford gaol.

It is a gratifying reflection, that the whole system of prison discipline has undergone an entire revision since the above period. This reformation first commenced under the great philanthropist Howard, who devoted his life to the prosecution of so benevolent an object, and finally fell a victim to his zeal. Subsequently, and in our own times, the system has been extended still further; and the names of a Gurney, a Buxton, a Hoare, and others, will long be remembered with gratitude, as the friends and benefactors of these outcasts of society. One more effort was still wanting to complete this humane enterprise, viz., to endeavor to eradicate the habits of vice, and to implant the seeds of virtue. This attempt has been made by Mrs. Fry and her excellent female associates in the prison of Newgate; and the result, in some instances, has proved that no one, however depraved, is beyond the reach of mercy; and that divine truth, conveyed with zeal, and in the accents of Christian love and kindness, seldom fails to penetrate into the heart and conscience.

The unwillingness with which the mind receives the consolations of religion, when laboring under an illusion, is painfully evinced in the following letter:—

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, March 24, 1782.

My dear Friend,—I was not unacquainted with Mr. B——'s extraordinary case,* before you favored me with his letter and his intended dedication to the Queen, though I am obliged to you for a sight of those two curiosities, which I do not recollect to have ever seen till you sent them. I could, however, were it not a subject that would make us all melancholy, point out to you some essential differences between his state of mind and my own, which would prove mine to be by far the most deplorable of the two. I suppose no man would despair, if he did not apprehend something singular in the circumstances of his own story, something that discriminates it from that of every other man, and that induces despair as an inevitable consequence. You may encounter his unhappy persuasion with as many instances as you please of persons who, like him, having renounced all hope, were yet restored; and may thence infer that he, like them, shall meet with a season of restoration—but it is in vain. Every such individual accounts himself an exception to all rules, and therefore the blessed reverse that others have experienced affords no ground of comfortable expectation to *him*. But, you will say, it is reasonable to conclude, that as all your predecessors in this vale of misery and horror have found themselves delightfully disappointed at last, so will you:—I grant the reasonableness of it; it would be sinful, perhaps, because uncharitable, to reason otherwise; but an argument, hypothetical in its nature, however rationally conducted, may lead to a false conclusion; and, in this instance, so will yours. But I forbear. For the cause above mentioned, I will say no more, though it is a subject on which I could write more than the mail would carry. I must deal with you as I deal with poor Mrs. Unwin, in all our disputes about it, cutting all controversy short by an appeal to the event. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, April 1, 1782.

My dear Friend,—I could not have found a

* Private correspondence.

* The person here alluded to is Simon Browne, a learned Dissenting minister, born at Shepton Mallet, about the year 1680. He labored under a most extraordinary species of mental derangement, which led him to believe "that God had in a gradual manner annihilated in him the thinking substance, and utterly divested him of consciousness; and that, although he retained the human shape, and the faculty of speaking, in a manner that appeared to others rational, he had all the while no more notion of what he said than a parrot." His intellectual faculties were not in any way affected by this singular alienation of mind, in proof of which he published many theological works, written with great clearness and vigor of thought. He addressed a Dedication to Queen Caroline, in which he details the peculiarities of his extraordinary case, but his friends prevented its publication. It was subsequently inserted in No. 88 of the "Adventurer." Such was the force of his delusion, that he considered himself no longer to be a moral agent; he desisted from his ministerial functions, and could never be induced to engage in any act of worship, public or private. In this state he died, in the year 1732, aged fifty-five years.

better trumpeter. Your zeal to serve the interest of my volume, together with your extensive acquaintance, qualify you perfectly for that most useful office. Methinks I see you with the long tube at your mouth, proclaiming to your numerous connexions my poetical merits, and at proper intervals levelling it at Olney, and pouring into my ear the welcome sound of their approbation. I need not encourage you to proceed; your breath will never fail in such a cause; and, thus encouraged, I myself perhaps may proceed also, and, when the versifying fit returns, produce another volume. Alas! we shall never receive such commendations from him on the woolsack as your good friend has lavished upon us. Whence I learn that, however important I may be in my own eyes, I am very insignificant in his. To make me amends, however, for this mortification, Mr. Newton tells me that my book is likely to run, spread, and prosper; that the grave cannot help smiling, and the gay are struck with the truth of it; and that it is likely to find its way into his Majesty's hands, being put into a proper course for that purpose. Now, if the King should fall in love with my muse, and with you for her sake, such an event would make us ample amends for the Chancellor's indifference, and you might be the first divine that ever reached a mitre, from the shoulders of a poet. But (I believe) we must be content, I with my gains, if I gain anything, and you with the pleasure of knowing that I am a gainer.

We laughed heartily at your answer to little John's question; and yet I think you might have given him a direct answer—"There are various sorts of cleverness, my dear.—I do not know that mine lies in the poetical way, but I can do ten times more towards the entertainment of company in the way of conversation than our friend at Olney. He can rhyme and I can rattle. If he had my talent, or I had his, we should be too charming, and the world would almost adore us."

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, April 27, 1782.

My dear William,—A part of Lord Harrington's new-raised corps have taken up their quarters at Olney, since you left us. They have the regimental music with them. The men have been drawn up this morning upon the Market-hill, and a concert, such as we have not heard these many years, has been performed at no great distance from our window. Your mother and I both thrust our heads into the coldest east wind that ever blew in April, that we might hear them to greater advantage. The band acquitted themselves with taste and propriety, not *blairing*, like trumpeters at a fair, but producing gentle and elegant symphony, such as charmed our ears and convinced us that no length of time can wear out a taste for harmony, and that though plays, balls, and masquerades, have lost all their power to please us, and we should find them not only insipid but insupportable, yet sweet music is sure to find a corresponding faculty in the soul, a sensibility that lives to the last, which even religion itself does not extinguish.

When we objected to your coming for a single night, it was only in the way of argument, and in hopes to prevail on you to contrive a longer abode with us. But rather than not see you at all, we should be glad of you though but for an hour. If the paths should be clean enough, and we are able to walk, (for you know we cannot ride,) we will endeavor to meet you in Weston-park. But I mention no particular hour, that I may not lay you under a supposed obligation to be punctual, which might be difficult at the end of so long a journey. Only, if the weather be favorable, you shall find us there in the evening. It is winter in the south, perhaps therefore it may be spring at least, if not summer, in the north; for I have read that it is warmest in Greenland when it is coldest here. Be that as it may, we may hope at the latter end of such an April, that the first change of wind will improve the season.

The curate's simile Latinized—

Sors adversa gerit stimulum, sed tendit et alas:
Pungit api similis, sed velut ista fugit.

What a dignity there is in the Roman language; and what an idea it gives us of the good sense and masculine mind of the people that spoke it! The same thought which, clothed in English, seems childish and even foolish, assumes a different air in Latin, and makes at least as good an epigram as some of Martial's.

I remember your making an observation, when here, on the subject of "parentheses," to which I acceded without limitation; but a little attention will convince us both that they are not to be universally condemned. When they abound, and when they are long, they both embarrass the sense, and are a proof that the writer's head is cloudy: that he has not properly arranged his matter, or is not well skilled in the graces of expression. But, as parenthesis is ranked by grammarians among the figures of rhetoric, we may suppose they had a reason for conferring that honor upon it. Accordingly we shall find that, in the use of some of our finest writers, as well as in the hands of the ancient poets and orators, it has a peculiar elegance, and imparts a beauty which the period would want without it.

"Hos nemus hunc, inquit, frondoso vertice collem
(Quis deus incertum est) habitat deus."

VIRG. *Æn.* 8.

In this instance, the first that occurred, it is graceful. I have not time to seek for more, nor room to insert them. But your own observation, I believe, will confirm my opinion.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 27, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Rather ashamed of having been at all dejected by the censure of the Critical Reviewers, who certainly could not read without prejudice a book replete with opinions and doctrines to which they cannot subscribe, I have at present no little occasion to keep a strict guard upon my vanity, lest it should be too much flattered by the following eulogium. I send it to you for the reasons I gave, when I imparted to you some other anecdotes of a similar kind, while we were together. Our interests in the success of this same volume are so closely united, that you *must* share with me in the praise or blame that attends it; and, sympathizing with me under the burden of injurious treatment, have a right to enjoy with me the cordials I now and then receive, as I happen to meet with more candid and favorable judges.

A merchant, a friend of ours,* (you will soon guess him,) sent my Poems to one of the first philosophers, one of the most eminent literary characters, as well as one of the most important in the political world, that the present age can boast of. Now perhaps your conjecturing faculties are puzzled, and you begin to ask "who, where, and what is he? speak out, for I am all impatience." I will not say a word more: the letter in which he returns his thanks for the present shall speak for him.†

We may now treat the critics as the archbishop of Toledo treated Gil Blas, when he found fault with one of his sermons. His grace gave him a kick and said, "Begone for a jackanapes, and furnish yourself with a better taste, if you know where to find it."

We are glad that you are safe at home again. Could we see at one glance of the eye what is passing every day upon all the roads in the kingdom, how many are terrified and hurt, how many plundered and abused, we should indeed find reason enough to be thankful for journeys performed in safety, and for deliverance from dangers we are not perhaps even permitted to see. When, in some of the high southern latitudes, and in a dark tempestuous night, a flash of lightning discovered to Captain Cook a vessel, which glanced along close by his side, and which but for the lightning he must have run foul of, both the danger and the transient light that showed it were undoubtedly designed to convey to him this wholesome instruction, that a particular Providence attended him, and that he was not only preserved from evils of which he had notice, but from many more of which he had no information, or even the least suspicion. What unlikely contingencies may nevertheless take place! How improbable that two ships should dash against each other, in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, and that, steering contrary courses from parts of the world so immensely distant from each other, they should yet move so exactly in a line as to clash, fill, and go to the bottom, in a sea, where all the ships in the world might be so dispersed as that none should see another! Yet this must have happened but for the remarkable interference which he has recorded. The same Providence indeed might as easily have conducted them so wide of each other that they should never have met at all, but then this lesson would have been lost; at least, the heroic voyager would have encompassed the globe, without having had occasion to relate an incident that so naturally suggests it.

I am no more delighted with the season than you are. The absence of the sun, which has graced the spring with much less of his presence than he vouchsafed to the winter, has a very uncomfortable effect upon my frame; I feel an invincible aversion to employment, which I am yet constrained to fly to as my only remedy against something worse. If I do nothing I am dejected, if I do anything I am weary, and that weariness is best described by the word lassitude, which of all weariness in the world is the most oppressive. But enough of myself and the weather.

The blow we have struck in the West Indies* will, I suppose, be decisive, at least for the present year, and so far as that part of our possessions is concerned in the present conflict. But the news-writers and their correspondents disgust me and make me sick. One victory, after such a long series of adverse occurrences, has filled them with self-conceit and impertinent boasting; and, while Rodney is almost accounted a Methodist for

* John Thornton, Esq.

† Here Cowper transcribed the letter written from Passy, by the American ambassador, Franklin, in praise of his book.

* This alludes to the celebrated victory gained by Sir George Rodney over Count de Grasse, April 12, 1782. On this occasion, eight sail of the line were captured from the French, three foundered at sea, two were forever disabled, and the French Admiral was taken in the Ville de Paris, which had been presented by the city of Paris to Louis XV. Lord Robert Manners fell in this engagement. It was the first instance where the attempt was ever made of breaking the line, a system adopted afterwards with great success by Lord Nelson. Lord Rodney, on receiving the thanks of Parliament on this occasion, addressed a letter of acknowledgment to the speaker, conveyed in the following terms. "To fulfil," he observed, "the wishes, and execute the commands of my Sovereign, was my duty. To command a fleet so well appointed, both in officers and men, was my good fortune; as by their undaunted spirit and valor, under Divine Providence, the glory of that day was acquired."

ascribing his success to Providence,* men who have renounced all dependence upon such a friend, without whose assistance nothing can be done, threaten to drive the French out of the sea, laugh at the Spaniards, sneer at the Dutch, and are to carry the world before them. Our enemies are apt to brag, and we deride them for it; but we can sing as loud as they can, in the same key; and no doubt, wherever our papers go, shall be derided in our turn. An Englishman's true glory should be, to do his business well and say little about it; but he disgraces himself when he puffs his prowess, as if he had finished his task, when he has but just begun it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 12, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Every extraordinary occurrence in our lives affords us an opportunity to learn, if we will, something more of our own hearts and tempers than we were before aware of. It is easy to promise ourselves beforehand that our conduct shall be wise, or moderate, or resolute, on any given occasion. But when that occasion occurs, we do not always find it easy to make good the promise: such a difference there is between theory and practice. Perhaps this is no new remark: but it is not a whit the worse for being old, if it be true.

Before I had published, I said to myself—you and I, Mr. Cowper, will not concern ourselves much about what the critics may say of our book. But, having once sent my wits for a venture, I soon became anxious about the issue, and found that I could not be satisfied with a warm place in my own good graces, unless my friends were pleased with me as much as I pleased myself. Meeting with their approbation, I began to feel the workings of ambition. It is well, said I, that my friends are pleased; but friends are sometimes partial, and mine, I have reason to think, are not altogether free from bias. Methinks I should like to hear a stranger or two speak well of me. I was presently gratified by the approbation of the "London Magazine" and the "Gentleman's," particularly by that of the former, and by the plaudit of Dr. Franklin. By the way, magazines are publications we have but little respect for till we ourselves are chronicled in them, and then they assume an importance in our esteem which before we could not allow them. But the "Monthly Review," the most formidable of all my judges, is still behind. What will that critical Rhadamanthus say, when my shivering genius shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for his award. Alas! when I wish for a favorable sentence from that quarter (to confess a weakness that I should not confess to all,) I feel myself not a little influenced by a tender regard to my reputation here, even among my neighbors at Olney. Here are watchmakers, who themselves are wits, and who at present, perhaps think me one. Here is a carpenter, and a baker, and not to mention others, here is your idol, Mr. ——, whose smile is fame. All these read the "Monthly Review," and all these will set me down for a dunce, if those terrible critics should show them the example. But oh! wherever else I am accounted dull, dear Mr. Griffith, let me pass for a genius at Olney.

We are sorry for little William's illness. It is, however, the privilege of infancy to recover almost immediately what it has lost by sickness. We are sorry too for Mr. ——'s dangerous condition. But he that is well prepared for the great journey cannot enter on it too soon for himself, though his friends will weep at his departure.

Yours, W. C.

The immediate success of his first volume was very far from being equal to its extraordinary merit. For some time it seemed to be neglected by the public, although the first poem in the collection contains such a powerful image of its author as might be thought sufficient not only to excite attention but to secure attachment: for Cowper had undesignedly executed a masterly portrait of himself in describing the true poet: we allude to the following verses in "Table Talk."

Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens and gives scent to every flower;
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
The dancing Naiads thro' the dewy meads:
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes; [known,
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds un-
With artless airs and concerts of her own;
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony strength words exquisitely sought:
Fancy, that from the bow that spans the sky
Brings colors dipt in heaven that never die;
A soul exalted above earth a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind;
And as the sun in rising beauty drest
Looks from the dappled orient to the west,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close—
An eye like his to catch the distant goal—
Or ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys:
Thus grac'd the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.

* Lord Rodney's despatches commenced in the following words: "It has pleased God, out of his Divine Providence, to grant to his Majesty's arms," &c. This was more religious than the nation at that time could tolerate. Lord Nelson afterwards was the first British Admiral that adopted the same language.

The concluding lines may be considered as an omen of that celebrity which such a writer, in the process of time, could not fail to obtain. How just a subject of surprise and admiration is it, to behold an author starting under such a load of disadvantages, and displaying on the sudden such a variety of excellence! For, neglected as it was for a few years, the first volume of Cowper exhibits such a diversity of poetical powers as have very rarely indeed been known to be united in the same individual. He is not only great in passages of pathos and sublimity, but he is equally admirable in wit and humor. After declaiming most copiously on sacred subjects, with the animation of a prophet and the simplicity of an apostle, he paints the ludicrous characters of common life with the comic force of a Moliere, particularly in his poem on Conversation, and his exquisite portrait of a fretful temper: a piece of moral painting so highly finished and so happily calculated to promote good humor, that a transcript of the verses cannot but interest the reader.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch;
You always do too little or too much:
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain;
Your elevated voice goes through the brain:
You fall at once into a lower key;
That's worse the drone-pipe of an humble bee!
The southern sash admits too strong a light;
You rise and drop the curtain:—now it's night.
He shakes with cold;—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze:—that's roasting him alive.
Serve him with venison and he chooses fish;
With sole that's just the sort he would not wish.
He takes what he at first profess'd to loath;
And in due time feeds heartily on both;
Yet still o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow but he gulps it down.
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder if he can.
Alas! his efforts double his distress;
He likes yours little and his own still less.
Thus, always teazing others always teaz'd,
His only pleasure is—to be displeas'd.

PART THE SECOND.

Mr. Bull, to whom the following poetical epistle is addressed, has already been mentioned as the person who suggested to Cowper the translation of Madame Guion's Hymns. Cowper used to say of him, that he was the master of a fine imagination, or, rather, that he was not master of it.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.*

Olney, June 22, 1782.

My dear Friend,

If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much or more to write;
But what we would so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time,
I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme,
To soothe my friend and had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning (for I most confess,
It were but folly to suppress)
His pleasure or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.
But though the sun is flaming high
I' th' centre of yon arch the sky
And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free;
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him unreserved praise,
And he by no uncommon lot
Was famed for virtues he had not;
Or whether which is like enough,
His Highness may have taken huff,
So seldom sought with invocation,
Since it has been the reigning fashion
To disregard his inspiration
I seem no brighter in my wits,
For all the radiance he emits,
Than if I saw through midnight vapor
The glimm'ring of a farthing taper.
O for a succedaneum then,
T' accelerate a creeping pen,
O for a ready succedaneum,
Quod caput cerebrum et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso
Et morbo jam caliginoso!
'Tis here; this oval box well fill'd
With best tobacco finely mill'd,
Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumber'd senses.

O Nymph of Transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt whate'er thy name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Orooonoquo's spacious tide,
Or listning with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which whether pulverized it gain
A speedy passage to the brain
Or, whether touch'd with fire, it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine—
Forgive the Bard if Bard be he,
Who once too wantonly made free
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;

* Private correspondence.

So may no blight infest thy plains,
And no unseasonable rains
And so may smiling Peace once more
Visit America's sad shore;
And thou secure from all alarms
Of thund'ring drums and glitt'ring arms,
Rove unconfined beneath the shade
Thy wide-expanded leaves have made;
So may thy votaries increase,
And navigation never cease.
May Newton with renew'd delights,
Perform thine odorif'rous rites
While clouds of incense half divine
Involve thy disappearing shrine;
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
Be always filling never full.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 16, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Though some people pretend to be clever in the way of prophetical forecast, and to have a peculiar talent of sagacity, by which they can divine the meaning of a providential dispensation while its consequences are yet in embryo, I do not. There is at this time to be found, I suppose, in the cabinet, and in both houses, a greater assemblage of able men, both as speakers and counsellors, than ever were contemporary in the same land. A man not accustomed to trace the workings of Providence, as recorded in Scripture, and that has given no attention to this particular subject, while employed in the study of profane history, would assert boldly, that it is a token for good, that much may be expected from them, and that the country, though heavily afflicted, is not yet to be despaired of, distinguished as she is by so many characters of the highest class. Thus he would say, and I do not deny that the event might justify his skill in prognostics. God works by means: and, in a case of great national perplexity and distress, wisdom and political ability seem to be the only natural means of deliverance. But a mind more religiously inclined, and perhaps a little tinctured with melancholy, might with equal probability of success hazard a conjecture directly opposite. Alas! what is the wisdom of man, especially when he trusts in it as the only god of his confidence? When I consider the general contempt that is poured upon all things sacred, the profusion, the dissipation, the knavish cunning, of some, the rapacity of others, and the impenitence of all, I am rather inclined to fear that God, who honors himself by bringing human glory to shame, and by disappointing the expectations of those whose trust is in creatures, has signalized the present day as a day of much human sufficiency and strength, has brought together from all quarters of the land the most illustrious men to be found in it, only that he may prove the vanity of idols, and that, when a great empire is falling, and he has pronounced a sentence of ruin against it, the inhabitants, be they weak or strong, wise or foolish, must fall with it. I am rather confirmed in this persuasion by observing that these luminaries of the state had no sooner fixed themselves in the political heaven, than the fall of the brightest of them shook all the rest. The arch of their power was no sooner struck than the key-stone slipped out of its place, those that were closest in connexion with it followed, and the whole building, new as it is, seems to be already a ruin. If a man should hold this language, who could convict him of absurdity? The Marquis of Rockingham is minister—all the world rejoices, anticipating success in war and a glorious peace. The Marquis of Rockingham is dead—all the world is afflicted, and relapses into its former despondence. What does this prove, but that the Marquis was their Almighty, and that, now he is gone, they know no other? But let us wait a little, they will find another. Perhaps the Duke of Portland, or perhaps the unpopular ——, whom they now represent as a devil, may obtain that honor. Thus God is forgot, and when he is, his judgments are generally his remembrancers.

How shall I comfort you upon the subject of your present distress? Pardon me that I find myself obliged to smile at it, because, who but yourself would be distressed upon such an occasion? You have behaved politely, and, like a gentleman, you have hospitably offered your house to a stranger, who could not, in your neighborhood at least, have been comfortably accommodated anywhere else. He, by neither refusing nor accepting an offer that did him too much honor, has disgraced himself, but not you. I think for the future you must be more cautious of laying yourself open to a stranger, and never again expose yourself to incivilities from an archdeacon you are not acquainted with.

Though I did not mention it, I felt with you what you suffered by the loss of Miss ——; I was only silent because I could minister no consolation to you on such a subject, but what I knew your mind to be already stored with. Indeed, the application of comfort in such cases is a nice business, and perhaps when best managed might as well be let alone. I remember reading many years ago a long treatise on the subject of consolation, written in French, the author's name I forgot, but I wrote these words in the margin. Special consolation! at least for a Frenchman, who is a creature the most easily comforted of any in the world!

We are as happy in Lady Austen, and she in us, as ever—having a lively imagination, and being passionately desirous of consolidating all into one family (for she has taken

her leave of London), she has just sprung a project which serves at least to amuse us and to make us laugh; it is to hire Mr. Small's house, on the top of Clifton-hill, which is large, commodious, and handsome, will hold us conveniently, and any friends who may occasionally favor us with a visit; the house is furnished, but, if it can be hired without the furniture, will let for a trifle—your sentiments if you please upon this *dem urche!*

I send you my last frank—our best love attends you individually and all together. I give you joy of a happy change in the season, and myself also. I have filled four sides in less time than two would have cost me a week ago; such is the effect of sunshine upon such a butterfly as I am.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Aug. 3, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Entertaining some hope that Mr. Newton's next letter would furnish me with the means of satisfying your inquiry on the subject of Dr. Johnson's opinion, I have till now delayed my answer to your last; but the information is not yet come, Mr. Newton having intermitted a week more than usual, since his last writing. When I receive it, favorable or not, it shall be communicated to you; but I am not over-sanguine in my expectations from that quarter. Very learned and very critical heads are hard to please. He may perhaps treat me with lenity for the sake of the subject and design, but the composition, I think, will hardly escape his censure. But though all doctors may not be of the same mind, there is one doctor at least, whom I have lately discovered, my professed admirer.* He too, like Johnson, was with difficulty persuaded to read, having an aversion to all poetry, except the "Night Thoughts," which, on a certain occasion, when being confined on board a ship he had no other employment, he got by heart. He was however prevailed upon, and read me several times over, so that if my volume had sailed with him instead of Dr. Young's, I perhaps might have occupied that shelf in his memory which he then allotted to the Doctor.

It is a sort of paradox, but it is true: we are never more in danger than when we think ourselves most secure, nor in reality more secure than when we seem to be most in danger. Both sides of this apparent contradiction were lately verified in my experience: passing from the greenhouse to the barn, I saw three kittens (for we have so many in our retinue) looking with fixed attention on something which lay on the threshold of a door nailed up. I took but little notice of them at first, but a loud hiss engaged me to attend more closely, when behold—a viper! the largest that I remember to have seen, rearing itself, darting its forked tongue, and ejaculating the aforesaid hiss at the nose of a kitten, almost in contact with his lips. I ran into the hall for a hoe with a long handle, with which I intended to assail him, and returning in a few seconds, missed him: he was gone, and I feared had escaped me. Still, however, the kitten sat watching immoveably on the same spot. I concluded, therefore, that sliding between the door and the threshold, he had found his way out of the garden into the yard. I went round immediately, and there found him in close conversation with the old cat, whose curiosity being excited by so novel an appearance, inclined her to pat his head repeatedly with her fore foot, with her claws however sheathed, and not in anger, but in the way of philosophic inquiry and examination. To prevent her falling a victim to so laudable an exercise of her talents, I interposed in a moment with the hoe, and performed upon him an act of decapitation, which, though not immediately mortal, proved so in the end. Had he slid into the passages, where it is dark, or had he, when in the yard, met with no interruption from the cat, and secreted himself in any of the out-houses, it is hardly possible but that some of the family must have been bitten; he might have been trodden upon without being perceived, and have slipped away before the sufferer could have distinguished what foe had wounded him. Three years ago we discovered one in the same place, which the barber slew with a trowel.

Our proposed removal to Mr. Small's was, as you may suppose, a jest, or rather a joco-serious matter. We never looked upon it as entirely feasible, yet we saw in it something so like practicability that we did not esteem it altogether unworthy of our attention. It was one of those projects which people of lively imaginations play with and admire for a few days, and then break in pieces. Lady Austen returned on Thursday from London, where she spent the last fortnight, and whither she was called by an unexpected opportunity to dispose of the remainder of her lease. She has therefore no longer any connexion with the great city, and no house but at Olney. Her abode is to be at the vicarage, where she has hired as much room as she wants, which she will embellish with her own furniture, and which she will occupy as soon as the minister's wife has produced another child, which is expected to make its entry in October.

Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister of Newport, a learned, ingenious, good-natured, pious friend of ours, who sometimes visits us, and whom we visited last week, put into my

* Dr. Franklin.

hands three volumes of French poetry, composed by Madame Guion—a quietist, say you, and a fanatic, I will have nothing to do with her.—'Tis very well, you are welcome to have nothing to do with her, but, in the meantime, her verse is the only French verse I ever read that I found agreeable; there is a neatness in it equal to that which we applaud, with so much reason, in the compositions of Prior. I have translated several of them, and shall proceed in my translations till I have filled a Lilliputian paper-book I happen to have by me, which, when filled, I shall present to Mr. Bull. He is her passionate admirer; rode twenty miles to see her picture in the house of a stranger, which stranger politely insisted on his acceptance of it, and it now hangs over his chimney. It is a striking portrait, too characteristic not to be a strong resemblance, and, were it encompassed with a glory, instead of being dressed in a nun's hood, might pass for the face of an angel.

Yours, W. C.

To this letter we annex a very lively *lusus poeticus* from the pen of Cowper, on the subject mentioned in the former part of the preceding letter.

THE COLUBRIAD.

Close by the threshold of a door nail'd fast,
Three kittens sat; each kitten look'd aghast.
I passing swift and inattentive by,
At the three kittens cast a careless eye; [there.
Not much concerned to know what they did
Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
But presently a loud and furious hiss
Caus'd me to stop and to exclaim "What's this?"
When, lo! upon the threshold met my view,
With head erect and eyes of fiery hue,
A viper long as Count de Grasse's queue.
Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,
Darting it full against a kitten's nose;
Who having never seen in field or house,
The like sat still and silent as a mouse:
Only projecting with attention due, [you?"
Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, "Who are
On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe:
With which well arm'd I hastened to the spot,
To find the viper, but I found him not.
And turning up the leaves and shrubs around,
Found only—that he was not to be found.
But still the kittens, sitting as before,
Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
"I hope" said I, "the villian I would kill
Has slipt between the door and the door's sill;
And if I make despatch and follow hard
No doubt but I shall find him in the yard:"
For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
Ev'n there I found him there the full-grown cat
His head with velvet paw did gently pat:
As curious as the kittens erst had been
To learn what this phenomenon might mean.
Fill'd with heroic ardor at the sight,
And fearing every moment he would bite,
And rob our household of our only cat,
That was of age to combat with a rat;
With outstretched hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

Lady Austen became a tenant of the vicarage at Olney. When Mr. Newton occupied that parsonage, he had opened a door in the garden-wall, which admitted him in the most commodious manner to visit the sequestered poet, who resided in the next house. Lady Austen had the advantage of this easy intercourse: and so captivating was her society, both to Cowper and to Mrs. Unwin, that these intimate neighbors might be almost said to make one family, as it became their custom to dine always together, alternately in the houses of the two ladies.

The musical talents of Lady Austen induced Cowper to write a few songs of peculiar sweetness and pathos, to suit particular airs that she was accustomed to play on the harpsichord. We insert three of these, as proofs that, even in his hours of social amusement, the poet loved to dwell on ideas of tender devotion and pathetic solemnity.

SONG WRITTEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1783, AT THE REQUEST OF LADY AUSTEN.

AIR—"*My fond shepherds of late,*" &c.

No longer I follow a sound;
No longer a dream I pursue:
O happiness! not to be found,
Unattainable treasure adieu!

I have sought thee in splendor and dress,
In the regions of pleasure and taste:
I have sought thee and seem'd to possess
But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
The voice of true wisdom inspires!
'Tis sufficient if peace be the scope
And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks it in meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above!

SONG.

AIR—"*The lass of Pattie's mill.*"

When all within is peace,
How nature seems to smile!
Delights that never cease,
The live-long day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve,
With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings to deceive
And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
Gives Nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
Enlivens all it sees;
Can make a wintry sky
Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
So beauteously array'd
In Nature's various robe
With won'rous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart
And longs to be at rest.

The following song, adapted to the march in Scipio, obtained too great a celebrity not to merit insertion in this place. It relates to the loss of the Royal George, the flag ship of Admiral Kempenfelt, which went down with nine hundred persons on board, (among whom was Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt,) at Spithead, August 29, 1782. The song was a favorite production of the poet's; so much so, that he amused himself by translating it into Latin verse. We take the version from one of his subsequent letters, for the sake of annexing it to the original.

SONG, ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full-charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.*

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

* Attempts have recently been made to recover this vessel; and some of the guns have been raised, and found to be in excellent order.

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII, CUI GEORGIUS, REGALE NOMEN, INDITUM.

Plangimus fortes. Periere fortes,
Patrium propter periere luctus
Bis quater centum; subitò sub alto
Æquore mersi.

Navis, immitens lateri, jacebat,
Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,
Cùm levis funes quatiens ad imum
Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, cadneam
Fortibus vitam voluere parcæ,
Nec sinunt ultrà tibi nos recentes
Nectere laurus.

Magne, qui nomen licèt incanorum,
Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti!
At tuos olim memorabit ævum
Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,
Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,
Fissa non rimis abies nec atrox
Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosi
Voce fallebant hilari laborem,
Et quiescebat calamoque dextram impleverat heros.

Vos, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,
Humidum ex alto spolium levate,
Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos
Reddite amicis!

Hi quidem (sic dis placuit) fuere:
Sed ratis nondum patris ire possit
Rursus in bellum Britonumque nomen
Tollere ad astra.

Let the reader, who wishes to impress on his mind a just idea of the variety and extent of Cowper's poetical powers, contrast this heroic ballad of exquisite pathos with his diverting history of John Gilpin!

That admirable and highly popular piece of pleasantry was composed at the period of which we are now speaking. An elegant and judicious writer, who has favored the public with three interesting volumes relating to the early poets of our country,* conjectures, that a poem, written by the celebrated Sir Thomas More in his youth, (the merry jest of the Serjeant and Frere) may have suggested to Cowper his tale of John Gilpin; but this singularly amusing ballad had a different origin; and it is a very remarkable fact, that, full of gayety and humor as this favorite of the public has abundantly proved itself to be, it was really composed at a time when the spirit of the poet was very deeply tinged with his depressive malady. It happened one afternoon, in those years when his accomplished friend, Lady Austen, made a part of his little evening circle, that she observed him sinking into increasing dejection.

* See Ellis's "Specimens of the early English Poets, with an historical sketch of the rise and progress of English poetry and language."

It was her custom on these occasions, to try all the resources of her sprightly powers for his immediate relief. She told him the story of John Gilpin (which had been treasured in her memory from her childhood) to dissipate the gloom of the passing hour. Its effect on the fancy of Cowper had the air of enchantment: he informed her the next morning, that convulsions of laughter, brought on by his recollection of her story, had kept him waking during the greatest part of the night, and that he had turned it into a ballad.—So arose the pleasant poem of John Gilpin. It was eagerly copied, and, finding its way rapidly to the newspapers, it was seized by the lively spirit of Henderson the comedian, a man, like the Yorick described by Shakspeare, "of infinite jest and most excellent fancy." By him it was selected as a proper subject for the display of his own comic powers, and, by reciting it in his public readings, he gave uncommon celebrity to the ballad, before the public suspected to what poet they were indebted for the sudden burst of ludicrous amusement. Many readers were astonished when the poem made its first authentic appearance in the second volume of Cowper.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Sept. 6, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Yesterday, and not before, I received your letter, dated the 11th of June, from the hands of Mr. Small. I should have been happy to have known him sooner; but whether being afraid of that horned monster, a Methodist, or whether from a principle of delicacy, or deterred by a flood, which has rolled for some weeks between Clifton and Olney, I know not,—he has favored me only with a taste of his company, and will leave me on Saturday evening, to regret that our acquaintance, so lately begun, must be so soon suspended. He will dine with us that day, which I reckon a fortunate circumstance, as I shall have an opportunity to introduce him to the liveliest and most entertaining woman in the country.† I have seen him but for half an hour, yet, without boasting of much discernment, I see that he is polite, easy, cheerful, and sensible. An old man thus qualified, cannot fail to charm the lady in question. As to his religion, I leave it—I am neither his bishop nor his confessor. A man of his character, and recommended by you, would be welcome here, were he a Gentoo or a Mahometan.

I learn from him that certain friends of mine, whom I have been afraid to inquire about by letter, are alive and well. The current of twenty years has swept away so many whom I once knew, that I doubted whether it might be advisable to send my love to your mother and your sisters. They may have thought my silence strange, but they have here the reason of it. Assure them of my affectionate remembrance, and that nothing would make me happier than to receive you all in my greenhouse, your own Mrs. Hill included. It is fronted with myrtles, and lined with mats, and would just hold us, for Mr. Small informs me *your* dimensions are much the same as usual.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

* Private correspondence.
† Lady Austen.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 4, 1782.

My dear Friend,—You are too modest; though your last consisted of three sides only, I am certainly a letter in your debt. It is possible that this present writing may prove as short. Yet, short as it may be, it will be a letter, and make me creditor, and you my debtor. A letter, indeed, ought not to be estimated by the length of it, but by the contents, and how can the contents of any letter be more agreeable than your last.

You tell me that John Gilpin made you laugh tears, and that the ladies at court are delighted with my poems. Much good may they do them! May they become as wise as the writer wishes them, and they will be much happier than he! I know there is in the book that wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May they receive it too! For, whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds, as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more. As to the famous horseman above mentioned, he and his feats are an inexhaustible source of merriment. At least we find him so, and seldom meet without refreshing ourselves with the recollection of them. You are perfectly at liberty to deal with them as you please. *Auctore tantùm anonymo, imprimantur;* and when printed send me a copy.

I congratulate you on the discharge of your duty and your conscience by the pains you have taken for the relief of the prisoners.—You proceeded wisely, yet courageously, and deserved better success. Your labors, however, will be remembered elsewhere, when you shall be forgotten here; and, if the poor folks at Chelmsford should never receive the benefit of them, you will yourself receive it in heaven. It is pity that men of fortune should be determined to acts of beneficence, sometimes by popular whim or prejudice, and sometimes by motives still more unworthy. The liberal subscription, raised in behalf of the widows of seamen lost in the Royal

George was an instance of the former. At least a plan, short and sensible letter in the newspaper, convinced me at the time that it was an unnecessary and injudicious collection: and the dilatory you found in effectuating your benevolent intentions on this occasion, constrains me to think that, had it been an affair of more notoriety than merely to furnish a few poor fellows with a little fuel to preserve their extremities from the frost, you would have succeeded better. Men really pious delight in doing good by stealth. But nothing less than an ostentatious display of bounty will satisfy mankind in general. I feel myself disposed to furnish you with an opportunity to shine in secret. We do what we can. But that *can* is little. You have rich friends, are eloquent on all occasions, and know how to be pathetic on a proper one. The winter will be severely felt at Olney by many, whose sobriety, industry, and honesty, recommended them to charitable notice; and we think we could tell such persons as Mr. ——, or Mr. ——, half a dozen tales of distress, that would find their way into hearts as feeling as theirs. You will do as you see good; and we in the meantime shall remain convinced that you will do your best. Lady Austen will, no doubt, do something, for she has great sensibility and compassion.

Yours, my dear Unwin, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.*

Olney, Nov. 5, 1782.

Charissime Taurorum—

Quot sunt, vel fuerunt, vel posthac aliis erunt in annis,

We shall rejoice to see you, and I just write to tell you so. Whatever else I want, I have, at least, this quality in common with publicans and sinners, that I love those that love me, and for that reason, you in particular. Your warm and affectionate manner demands it of me. And, though I consider your love as growing out of a mistaken expectation that you shall see me a spiritual man hereafter, I do not love you much the less for it. I only regret that I did not know you intimately in those happier days, when the frame of my heart and mind was such as might have made a connexion with me not altogether unworthy of you.

I add only Mrs. Unwin's remembrances, and that I am glad you believe me to be, what I truly am,

Your faithful and affectionate, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Nov. 11, 1782.

My dear Friend,—Your shocking scrawl, as you term it, was however a very welcome one. The character indeed has not quite the neatness and beauty of an engraving; but if it cost me some pains to decipher it, they were well rewarded by the minute information it conveyed. I am glad your health is such that you have nothing more to complain of than may be expected on the down-hill side of life. If mine is better than yours, it is to be attributed, I suppose, principally to the constant enjoyment of country air and retirement; the most perfect regularity in matters of eating, drinking, and sleeping; and a happy emancipation from everything that wears the face of business. I lead the life I always wished for, and, the single circumstance of dependence excepted, (which, between ourselves, is very contrary to my predominant humor and disposition,) have no want left broad enough for another wish to stand upon.

You may not, perhaps, live to see your trees attain to the dignity of timber: I nevertheless approve of your planting, and the disinterested spirit that prompts you to it. Few people plant when they are young; a thousand other less profitable amusements divert their attention; and most people, when the date of youth is once expired, think it too late to begin. I can tell you, however, for your comfort and encouragement, that when a grove which Major Cowper had planted was of eighteen years' growth, it was no small ornament to his grounds, and afforded as complete a shade as could be desired. Were I as old as your mother, in whose longevity I rejoice, and the more because I consider it as in some sort a pledge and assurance of yours, and should come to the possession of land worth planting, I would begin to-morrow, and even without previously insisting upon a bond from Providence that I should live five years longer.

I saw last week a gentleman who was lately at Hastings. I asked him where he lodged. He replied at P——'s. I next inquired after the poor man's wife, whether alive or dead. He answered, dead. So then, said I, she has scolded her last; and a sensible old man will go down to his grave in peace. Mr. P——, to be sure, is of no great consequence either to you or to me: but, having so fair an opportunity to inform myself about him, I could not neglect it. It gives me pleasure to learn somewhat of a man I knew a little of so many years since, and for that reason merely I mention the circumstance to you.

I find a single expression in your letter which needs correction. You say I carefully avoid paying you a visit at Wargrave. Not so; but connected as I happily am, and rooted where I am, and not having travelled these twenty years—being besides of an indolent

* Private correspondence.

temper, and having spirits that cannot bear a bustle—all these are so many insuperables in the way. They are not however in yours; and if you and Mrs. Hill will make the experiment, you shall find yourselves as welcome here, both to me and to Mrs. Unwin, as it is possible you can be anywhere.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Nov., 1782.

My dear Friend,—I am to thank you for a very fine cod, which came most opportunely to make a figure on our table, on an occasion that made him singularly welcome. I write, and you send me a fish. This is very well, but not altogether what I want. I wish to hear from you, because the fish, though he serves to convince me that you have me still in remembrance, says not a word of those that sent him; and, with respect to your and Mrs. Hill's health, prosperity, and happiness, leaves me as much in the dark as before. You are aware, likewise, that where there is an exchange of letters it is much easier to write. But I know the multiplicity of your affairs, and therefore perform my part of the correspondence as well as I can, convinced that you would not omit yours, if you could help it.

Three days since I received a note from old Mr. Small, which was more than civil—it was warm and friendly. The good veteran excuses himself for not calling upon me, on account of the feeble state in which a fit of the gout had left him. He tells me however that he has seen Mrs. Hill, and your improvements at Wargrave, which will soon become an ornament to the place. May they, and may you both live long to enjoy them! I shall be sensibly mortified if the season and his gout together should deprive me of the pleasure of receiving him here; for he is a man much to my taste, and quite an unique in this country.

My eyes are in general better than I remember them to have been since I first opened them upon this sublunary stage, which is now a little more than half a century ago. We are growing old; but this is between ourselves: the world knows nothing of the matter. Mr. Small tells me you look much as you did; and as for me, being grown rather plump, the ladies tell me I am as young as ever.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 18, 1782.

My dear William,—On the part of the poor, and on our part, be pleased to make acknowledgements, such as the occasion calls for, to our beneficent friend, Mr. ——. I call him ours, because, having experienced his kindness to myself, in a former instance, and in the present his disinterested readiness to succor the distressed, my ambition will be satisfied with nothing less. He may depend upon the strictest secrecy: no creature shall hear him mentioned, either now or hereafter, as the person from whom we have received this bounty. But when I speak of him, or hear him spoken of by others, which sometimes happens, I shall not forget what is due to so rare a character. I wish, and your mother wishes too, that he could sometimes take us in his way to ——: he will find us happy to receive a person whom we must needs account it an honor to know. We shall exercise our best discretion in the disposal of the money; but in this town, where the gospel has been preached so many years, where the people have been favored so long with laborious and conscientious ministers, it is not an easy thing to find those who make no profession of religion at all, and are yet proper objects of charity. The profane are so profane, so drunken, dissolute, and in every respect worthless, that to make them partakers of his bounty would be to abuse it. We promise, however, that none shall touch it but such as are miserably poor, yet at the same time industrious and honest, two characters frequently united here, where the most watchful and unremitting labor will hardly procure them bread. We make none but the cheapest laces, and the price of them is fallen almost to nothing. Thanks are due to yourself likewise, and are hereby accordingly rendered, for waiving your claim in behalf of your own parishioners. You are always with them, and they are always, at least some of them, the better for your residence among them. Olney is a populous place, inhabited chiefly by the half-starved and the ragged of the earth, and it is not possible for our small party and small ability to extend their operations so far as to be much felt among such numbers. Accept, therefore, your share of their gratitude, and be convinced that, when they pray for a blessing upon those who relieved their wants, he that answers that prayer, and when he answers it, will remember his servant at Stock.

I little thought when I was writing the history of John Gilpin, that he would appear in print—I intended to laugh, and to make two or three others laugh, of whom you were one. But now all the world laugh, at least if they have the same relish for a tale ridiculous in itself, and quaintly told, as we have. Well, they do not always laugh so innocently, and at so small an expense, for, in a world like this, abounding with subjects

* Private correspondence.

for satire, and with satirical wits to mark them, a thing that hurts nobody has at least the grace of novelty to recommend it, Swift's darling motto was, *Vive la bagatelle!* a good wish for a philosopher of his complexion, the greater part of whose wisdom, whencesoever it came, most certainly came not from above. *La bagatelle* has no enemy in me, though it has neither so warm a friend nor so able a one as it had in him. If I trifle, and merely trifle, it is because I am reduced to it by necessity—a melancholy that nothing else so effectually disperses engages me sometimes in the arduous task of being merry by force. And, strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood, and but for that saddest mood, perhaps, had never been written at all.

I hear from Mrs. Newton that some great persons have spoken with great approbation of a certain book—who they are, and what they have said, I am to be told in a future letter. The Monthly Reviewers, in the meantime, have satisfied me well enough.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear William,—Dr. Beattie is a respectable character.* I account him a man of sense, a philosopher, a scholar, a person of distinguished genius, and a good writer. I believe him too a Christian; with a profound reverence for the scripture, with great zeal and ability to enforce the belief of it, both which he exerts with the candor and good manners of a gentleman: he seems well entitled to that allowance; and to deny it him, would impeach one's right to the appellation. With all these good things to recommend him, there can be no dearth of sufficient reasons to read his writings. You favored me some years since with one of his volumes; by which I was both pleased and instructed: and I beg you will send me the new one, when you can conveniently spare it, or rather bring it yourself, while the swallows are yet upon the wing: for the summer is going down apace.

You tell me you have been asked, if I am intent upon another volume? I reply, not at present, not being convinced that I have met with sufficient encouragement. I account myself happy in having pleased a few, but am not rich enough to despise the many. I do not know what sort of market my commodity has found, but, if a slack one, I must beware how I make a second attempt. My bookseller will not be willing to incur a certain loss; and I can as little afford it. Notwithstanding what I have said, I write, and am even now writing, for the press. I told you that I had translated several of the poems of Madame Guion. I told you too, or I am mistaken, that Mr. Bull designed to print them. That gentleman is gone to the sea-side with Mrs. Wilberforce, and will be absent six weeks. My intention is to surprise him at his return with the addition of as much more translation as I have already given him. This, however, is still less likely to be a popular work than my former. Men that have no religion would despise it; and men that have no religious experience would not understand it. But the strain of simple and unaffected piety in the original is sweet beyond expression. She sings like an angel, and for that very reason has found but few admirers. Other things I write too, as you will see on the other side, but these merely for my amusement.*

* The well-known author of "The Minstrel."

TO MRS. NEWTON.†

Olney, Nov. 23, 1782.

My dear Madam,—Accept my thanks for the trouble you take in vending my poems, and still more for the interest you take in their success. My authorship is undoubtedly pleased, when I hear that they are approved either by the great or the small; but to be approved by the great, as Horace observed many years ago, is fame indeed. Having met with encouragement, I consequently wish to write again; but wishes are a very small part of the qualifications necessary for such a purpose. Many a man, who has succeeded tolerably well in his first attempt, has spoiled all by the second. But it just occurs to me that I told you so once before, and, if my memory had served me with the intelligence a minute sooner, I would not have repeated the observation now.

The winter sets in with great severity. The rigor of the season, and the advanced price of grain, are very threatening to the poor. It is well with those that can feed upon a promise, and wrap themselves up warm in the robe of salvation. A good fireside and a well-spread table are but very indifferent substitutes for these better accommodations: so very indifferent, that I would gladly exchange them both for the rags and the unsatisfied hunger of the poorest creature that looks forward with hope to a better world, and weeps tears of joy in the midst of penury and distress. What a world is this! How mysteriously governed, and in appearance left to itself! One man, having squandered thousands at a gaming-table, finds it convenient to travel; gives his estate to somebody to manage for him; amuses

* This letter closed with the English and Latin verses on the loss of the Royal George, inserted before.

† Private correspondence.

himself a few years in France and Italy; returns, perhaps, wiser than he went, having acquired knowledge which, but for his follies, he would never have acquired: again makes a splendid figure at home, shines in the senate, governs his country as its minister, is admired for his abilities, and, if successful, adored at least by a party. When he dies he is praised as a demi-god, and his monument records every thing but his vices. The exact contrast of such a picture is to be found in many cottages at Olney. I have no need to describe them; you know the characters I mean. They love God, they trust him, they pray to him in secret, and, though he means to reward them openly, the day of recompense is delayed. In the meantime they suffer everything that infirmity and poverty can inflict upon them. Who would suspect, that has not a spiritual eye to discern it, that the fine gentleman was one whom his Maker had in abhorrence, and the wretch last-mentioned dear to him as the apple of his eye! It is no wonder that the world, who are not in the secret, find themselves obliged, some of them, to doubt a Providence, and others absolutely to deny it, when almost all the real virtue there is in it is to be found living and dying in a state of neglected obscurity, and all the vices of others cannot exclude them from the privilege of worship and honor! But behind the curtain the matter is explained; very little, however, to the satisfaction of the great.

If you ask me why I have written thus, and to you especially, to whom there was no need to write thus, I can only reply, that, having a letter to write, and no news to communicate, I picked up the first subject I found, and pursued it as far as was convenient for my purpose.

Mr. Newton and I are of one mind on the subject of patriotism. Our dispute was no sooner begun than it ended. It would be well, perhaps, if, when two disputants begin to engage, their friends would hurry each into a separate chaise, and order them to opposite points of the compass. Let one travel twenty miles east, the other as many west; then let them write their opinions by the post. Much altercation and chafing of the spirit would be prevented; they would sooner come to a right understanding, and running away from each other, would carry on the combat more judiciously, in exact proportion to the distance.

My love to that gentleman, if you please; and tell him that, like him, though I love my country, I hate its follies and its sins, and had rather see it scourged in mercy than judicially hardened by prosperity.

Yours, dear Madam, as ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Dec. 7, 1782.

My dear Friend,—At seven o'clock this evening, being the seventh of December, I imagine I see you in your box at the coffee-house. No doubt the waiter, as ingenious and adroit as his predecessors were before him, raises the tea-pot to the ceiling with his right hand, while in his left the tea-cup descending almost to the floor, receives a limpid stream; limpid in its descent, but no sooner has it reached its destination, than frothing and foaming to the view, it becomes a roaring syllabub. This is the nineteenth winter since I saw you in this situation; and if nineteen more pass over me before I die, I shall still remember a circumstance we have often laughed at.

How different is the complexion of your evenings and mine!—yours, spent amid the ceaseless hum that proceeds from the inside of fifty noisy and busy periwigs; mine, by a domestic fire-side, in a retreat as silent as retirement can make it, where no noise is made but what we make for our own amusement. For instance, here are two rusties and your humble servant in company. One of the ladies has been playing on the harpsichord, while I with the other have been playing at battledore and shuttlecock. A little dog, in the meantime, howling under the chair of the former, performed in the vocal way to admiration. This entertainment over, I began my letter, and, having nothing more important to communicate, have given you an account of it. I know you love dearly to be idle, when you can find an opportunity to be so; but, as such opportunities are rare with you, I thought it possible that a short description of the idleness I enjoy might give you pleasure. The happiness we cannot call our own we yet seem to possess, while we sympathize with our friends who can.

The papers tell me that peace is at hand, and that it is at a great distance; that the siege of Gibraltar is abandoned, and that it is to be still continued. It is happy for me, that, though I love my country, I have but little curiosity. There was a time when these contradictions would have distressed me; but I have learned by experience that it is best for little people like myself to be patient, and to wait till time affords the intelligence which no speculations of theirs can ever furnish.

I thank you for a fine cod with oysters, and hope that ere long I shall have to thank you for procuring me Elliott's medicines. Every time I feel the least uneasiness in either eye, I tremble lest, my Æsculapius being departed, my infallible remedy should be lost forever. Adieu. My respects to Mrs. Hill. Yours, faithfully. W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan. 19, 1783.

My dear William,—Not to retaliate, but for want of opportunity, I have delayed writing. From a scene of most uninterrupted retirement, we have passed at once into a state of constant engagement, not that our society is much multiplied. The addition of an individual has made all this difference. Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's *chateau*. In the morning I walk with one or other of the ladies, and in the afternoon wind thread. Thus did Hercules and Sampson, and thus do I; and, were both those heroes living, I should not fear to challenge them to a trial of skill in that business, or doubt to beat them both. As to killing lions, and other amusements of that kind, with which they were so delighted, I should be their humble servant, and beg to be excused.

Having no frank, I cannot send you Mr. ——'s two letters, as I intended. We corresponded as long as the occasion required, and then ceased. Charmed with his good sense, politeness, and liberality to the poor, I was indeed ambitious of continuing a correspondence with him, and told him so. Perhaps I had done more prudently had I never proposed it. But warm hearts are not famous for wisdom, and mine was too warm to be very considerate on such an occasion. I have not heard from him since, and have long given up all expectation of it. I know he is too busy a man to have leisure for me, and I ought to have recollected it sooner. He found time to do much good, and to employ us, as his agents, in doing it, and that might have satisfied me. Though laid under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, both by him and by you on his behalf, I consider myself as under no obligation to conceal from you the remittances he made. Only, in my turn, I beg leave to request secrecy on your part, because, intimate as you are with him, and highly as he values you, I cannot yet be sure, that the communication would please him, his delicacies on this subject being as singular as his benevolence. He sent forty pounds, twenty at a time. Olney has not had such a friend as this many a day; nor has there been an instance, at any time, of a few families so effectually relieved, or so completely encouraged to the pursuit of that honest industry, by which, their debts being paid, and the parents and children comfortably clothed, they are now enabled to maintain themselves. Their labor was almost in vain before; but now it answers: it earns them bread, and all their other wants are plentifully supplied.*

I wish that, by Mr. ——'s assistance, your purpose in behalf of the prisoners may be effectuated. A pen so formidable as his might do much good, if properly directed. The dread of a bold censure is ten times more moving than the most eloquent persuasion. They that cannot feel for others are the persons of all the world who feel most sensibly for themselves.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

* The benevolent character here alluded to is John Thornton, Esq.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Jan. 26, 1783.

My dear Friend,—It is reported among persons of the best intelligence at Olney—the barber, the schoolmaster, and the drummer of a corps quartered at this place—that the belligerent powers are at last reconciled, the articles of the treaty adjusted, and that peace is at the door.† I saw this morning, at nine o'clock, a group of about twelve figures, very closely engaged in a conference, as I suppose, upon the same subject. The scene of consultation was a blacksmith's shed, very comfortably screened from the wind, and directly opposed to the morning sun. Some held their hands behind them, some had them folded across their bosom, and others had thrust them into their breeches pockets. Every man's posture bespoke a pacific turn of mind; but, the distance being too great for their words to reach me, nothing transpired. I am willing, however, to hope that the secret will not be a secret long, and that you and I, equally interested in the event, though not perhaps equally well informed, shall soon have an opportunity to rejoice in the completion of it. The powers of Europe have clashed with each other to a fine purpose;‡ that the Americans, at length declared independent, may keep themselves so, if they can; and that what the parties, who have thought proper to dispute upon that point have wrested from each other in the course of the conflict may be, in the issue of it, restored to the proper owner. Nations may be guilty of a conduct that would render an individual infamous forever; and yet carry their heads high, talk of their glory, and despise their neighbors. Your opinions and mine, I mean our political ones, are not exactly of a piece, yet I cannot think otherwise upon this subject than I have always done. England, more perhaps through the fault of her generals than her councils, has, in some instances, acted with a spirit of cruel animosity she was never chargeable with till now. But this is the worst that can be said. On the other hand, the Americans, who, if they had contented themselves with a struggle for lawful liberty, would have deserved

* Private correspondence.

† Preliminaries of peace with America and France were signed at Versailles, Jan. 20th, 1783.

‡ France, Spain, and Holland, all of whom united with America against England.

applause, seem to me to have incurred the guilt of parricide, by renouncing their parent, by making her ruin their favorite object, and by associating themselves with her worst enemy for the accomplishment of their purpose. France, and of course Spain, have acted a treacherous, a thievish part. They have stolen America from England; and, whether they are able to possess themselves of that jewel or not hereafter, it was doubtless what they intended. Holland appears to me in a meaner light than any of them. They quarrelled with a friend for an enemy's sake. The French led them by the nose, and the English have thrashed them for suffering it. My views of the contest being, and having been always, such, I have consequently brighter hopes for England than her situation some time since seemed to justify. She is the only injured party. America may perhaps call her the aggressor; but, if she were so, America has not only repelled the injury, but done a greater. As to the rest, if perfidy, treachery, avarice, and ambition, can prove their cause to have been a rotten one, those proofs are found upon them. I think, therefore, that, whatever scourge may be prepared for England on some future day, her ruin is not yet to be expected.

Acknowledge now that I am worthy of a place under the shed I described, and that I should make no small figure among the *quidnuncs* of Olney.

I wish the society you have formed may prosper. Your subjects will be of greater importance, and discussed with more sufficiency.* The earth is a grain of sand, but the spiritual interests of man are commensurate with the heavens.

Yours, my dear friend, as ever,

W. C.

The humor of the following letter in reference to the peace, is ingenious and amusing.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.†

Olney, Feb. 2, 1783.

I give you joy of the restoration of that sincere and firm friendship between the kings of England and France, that has been so long interrupted. It is a great pity when hearts so cordially united are divided by trifles. Thirteen pitiful colonies, which the king of England chose to keep, and the king of France to obtain, if he could, have disturbed that harmony which would else no doubt have subsisted between those illustrious personages to this moment. If the king of France, whose greatness of mind is only equalled by that of his queen, had regarded them, unworthy of his notice as they were, with an eye of suitable indifference; or, had he thought it a matter deserving in any degree his princely attention, that they were in reality the property of his good friend the king of England; or, had the latter been less obstinately determined to hold fast his interest in them, and could he with that civility and politeness in which monarchs are expected to excel, have entreated his majesty of France to accept a bagatelle, for which he seemed to have conceived so strong a predilection, all this mischief had been prevented. But monarchs, alas! crowned and seeptred as they are, are yet but men; they fall out, and are reconciled, just like the meanest of their subjects. I cannot, however, sufficiently admire the moderation and magnanimity of the king of England. His dear friend on the other side of the Channel has not indeed taken actual possession of the colonies in question, but he has effectually wrested them out of the hands of their original owner, who nevertheless, letting fall the extinguisher of patience upon the flame of his resentment, and glowing with no other flame than that of the sincerest affection, embraces the king of France again, gives him Senegal and Goree in Africa, gives him the islands he had taken from him in the West, gives him his conquered territories in the East, gives him a fishery upon the banks of Newfoundland; and, as if all this were too little, merely because he knows that Louis has a partiality for the king of Spain, gives to the latter an island in the Mediterranean, which thousands of English had purchased with their lives; and in America all that he wanted, at least all that he could ask. No doubt there will be great cordiality between this royal trio for the future: and, though wars may perhaps be kindled between their posterity some ages hence, the present generation shall never be witnesses of such a calamity again. I expect soon to hear that the queen of France, who just before this rupture happened, made the queen of England a present of a watch, has, in acknowledgment of all these acts of kindness, sent her also a seal wherewith to ratify the treaty. Surely she can do no less.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Feb. 8, 1783.

My dear Friend,—When I consider the peace as the work of our ministers, and reflect that, with more wisdom, or more spirit, they might perhaps have procured a better, I confess it does not please me.† Such ano-

* This passage alludes to the formation of what was called "the Eclectic Society," consisting of several pious ministers, who statedly met for the purpose of mutual edification. It consisted of Newton, Scott, Cecil, Foster, &c. It is still in existence.

† Private correspondence.

* Private correspondence.

† Lord Shelburne, who made this peace, was taunted in the House of Commons by Mr. Fox with having been previously averse to it, and even of having said that,

other peace would ruin us, I suppose, as effectually as a war protracted to the extremest inch of our ability to bear it. I do not think it just that the French should plunder us and be paid for doing it; nor does it appear to me that there was absolute necessity for such tameness on our part as we discover in the present treaty. We give away all that is demanded, and receive nothing but what was our own before. So far as this stain upon our national honor, and this diminution of our national property, are a judgment upon our iniquities, I submit, and have no doubt but that ultimately it will be found to be judgment mixed with mercy. But so far as I see it to be the effect of French knavery and British despondency, I feel it as a disgrace, and grumble at it as a wrong. I dislike it the more, because the peacemaker has been so immoderately praised for his performance, which is, in my opinion, a contemptible one enough. Had he made the French smart for their baseness, I would have praised him too; a minister should have shown his wisdom by securing some points, at least for the benefit of his country. A schoolboy might have made concessions. After all perhaps the worse consequence of this awkward business will be dissension in the two Houses, and dissatisfaction throughout the kingdom. They that love their country will be grieved to see her trampled upon; and they that love mischief will have a fair opportunity of making it. Were I a member of the Commons, even with the same religious sentiments as impress me now, I should think it my duty to condemn it.

You will suppose me a politician; but in truth I am nothing less. These are the thoughts that occur to me while I read the newspaper; and, when I have laid it down, I feel myself more interested in the success of my early cucumbers than in any part of this great and important subject. If I see them droop a little, I forget that we have been many years at war: that we have made a humiliating peace; that we are deeply in debt, and unable to pay. All these reflections are absorbed at once in the anxiety I feel for a plant, the fruit of which I cannot eat when I have procured it. How wise, how consistent, how respectable a creature is man!

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her kind letter, and for executing her commissions. We truly love you both, think of you often, and one of us prays for you;—the other will, when he can pray for himself.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Feb. 13, 1783.

My dear Friend,—In writing to you I never want a subject. Self is always at hand, and self, with its concerns, is always interesting to a friend.

You may think perhaps that, having commenced poet by profession, I am always writing verses. Not so; I have written nothing, at least finished nothing, since I published, except a certain facetious history of John Gilpin, which Mrs. Unwin would send to the "Public Advertiser," perhaps you might read it without suspecting the author.

My book procures me favors, which my modesty will not permit me to specify, except one, which, modest as I am, I cannot suppress, a very handsome letter from Dr. Franklin at Passy. These fruits it has brought me.

I have been refreshing myself with a walk in the garden, where I find that January (who according to Chaucer was the husband of May) being dead, February has married the widow.

Yours, &c.. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Feb. 20, 1783.

Suspecting that I should not have hinted at Dr. Franklin's encomium under any other influence than that of vanity, I was several times on the point of burning my letter for that very reason. But, not having time to write another by the same post, and believing that you would have the grace to pardon a little self-complacency in an author on so trying an occasion, I let it pass. One sin naturally leads to another and a greater, and thus it happens now, for I have no way to gratify your curiosity, but by transcribing the letter in question. It is addressed, by the way, not to me, but to an acquaintance of mine, who had transmitted the volume to him without my knowledge.

"Passy,* May 8, 1782.

"Sir, I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me, and am much obliged by your kind present of a book. The relish for reading of poetry had long since left me, but there is something so new in the manner, so easy, and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise,

when the independence of America should be granted, the sun of Britain would have set; and that the recognition of its independence deserved to be stained with the blood of the minister who should sign it. It was in allusion to this circumstance that Mr. Fox applied to him the following ludicrous distich:

You've done a noble deed, in Nature's spite,
Tho' you think you are wrong, yet I'm sure you are right.

Lord Shelburne's defence was, that he was compelled to the measure, and not so much the author as the instrument of it. See *Parliamentary Debates* of that time.

* A beautiful village near Paris, on the road to Versailles.

and so just in the sentiments, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once. I beg you to accept my thankful acknowledgments, and to present my respects to the author.

"Your most obedient humble servant,
"B. FRANKLIN."

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

My dear Friend,—Great revolutions happen in this ants' nest of ours. One emmet of illustrious character and great abilities pushes out another; parties are formed, they range themselves in formidable opposition, they threaten each other's ruin, they cross over and are mingled together,* and like the coruscations of the Northern Aurora amuse the spectator, at the same time that by some they are supposed to be forerunners of a general dissolution.

There are political earthquakes as well as natural ones, the former less shocking to the eye, but not always less fatal in their influence than the latter. The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was made up of heterogeneous and incompatible materials, and accordingly broken. Whatever is so formed must expect a like catastrophe.

I have an etching of the late Chancellor hanging over the parlor chimney. I often contemplate it, and call to mind the day when I was intimate with the original. It is very like him, but he is disguised by his hat, which, though fashionable, is awkward; by his great wig, the tie of which is hardly discernible in profile, and by his band and gown, which give him an appearance clumsily sacerdotal. Our friendship is dead and buried; yours is the only surviving one of all with which I was once honored.

Adieu. W. C.

The sarcasm conveyed in the close of this letter, and evidently pointed at Lord Thurlow, is severe, and yet seems to be merited. It will be remembered, that Lord Thurlow and Cowper were on terms of great intimacy when at Westminster school, though separated in after life; that Cowper subsequently presented him with a copy of his poems, accompanied by a letter, reminding him of their former friendship; and that his lordship treated him with forgetfulness and neglect. It is due, however, to the memory of Lord Thurlow, to state that instances are not wanting to prove the benevolence of his character. When the south of Europe was recommended to Dr. Johnson, to renovate his declining strength, he generously offered to advance the sum of five hundred pounds for that purpose.†

* This expression, as well as the allusion to Nebuchadnezzar's image, refers to the famous coalition ministry, under Lord North and Mr. Fox.

† See Murphy's Life of Johnson.

Nor ought we to forgot Lord Thurlow's treatment of the poet Crabbe. The latter presented to him one of his poems. "I have no time," said Lord Thurlow, "to read verses; my avocations do not permit it." "There was a time," retorted the poet, "when the encouragement of literature was considered to be a duty appertaining to the illustrious station which your lordship holds." Lord Thurlow frankly acknowledged his error, and nobly redeemed it. "I ought," he observed, "to have noticed your poem, and I heartily forgive your rebuke:" and in proof of his sincerity he generously transmitted the sum of one hundred pounds, and subsequently gave him preferment in the church.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Feb. 24, 1783.

My dear Friend,—A weakness in one of my eyes may possibly shorten my letter, but I mean to make it as long as my present materials, and my ability to write, can suffice for.

I am almost sorry to say that I am reconciled to the peace, being reconciled to it not upon principles of approbation but necessity. The deplorable condition of the country, insisted on by the friends of administration, and not denied by their adversaries, convinces me that our only refuge under Heaven was in the treaty with which I quarrelled. The treaty itself I find less objectionable than I did, Lord Shelburne having given a color to some of the articles that makes them less painful in the contemplation. But my opinion upon the whole affair is, that now is the time (if indeed there is salvation for the country) for Providence to interpose to save it. A peace with the greatest political advantages would not have healed us; a peace with none may procrastinate our ruin for a season, but cannot ultimately prevent it. The prospect may make all tremble who have no trust in God, and even they that trust may tremble. The peace will probably be of short duration; and in the ordinary course of things another war must end us. A great country in ruins will not be beheld with eyes of indifference, even by those who have a better country to look to. But with them all will be well at last.

As to the Americans, perhaps I do not forgive them as I ought; perhaps I shall always think of them with some resentment, as the destroyers, intentionally the destroyers, of this country. They have pushed that point farther than the house of Bourbon could have carried it in half a century. I may be prejudiced against them, but I do not think them equal to the task of establishing an empire.

* Private correspondence.

Great men are necessary for such a purpose: and their great men, I believe, are yet unborn.* They have had passion and obstinacy enough to do us much mischief; but whether the event will be salutary to themselves or not, must wait for proof. I agree with you that it is possible America may become a land of extraordinary evangelical light,† but at the same time, I cannot discover anything in their new situation peculiarly favorable to such a supposition. They cannot have more liberty of conscience than they had; at least, if that liberty was under any restraint, it was a restraint of their own making. Perhaps a new settlement in church and state may leave them less.—Well—all will be over soon. The time is at hand when an empire will be established that shall fill the earth. Neither statesmen nor generals will lay the foundation of it, but it shall rise at the sound of the trumpet.

I am well in body, but with a mind that would wear out a frame of adamant; yet, upon *my* frame, which is not very robust, its effects are not discernable. Mrs. Unwin is in health. Accept our unalienable love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend, truly, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.‡

Olney, March 7, 1783.

My dear Friend,—When will you come and tell us what you think of the peace? Is it a good peace in itself, or a good peace only in reference to the ruinous condition of our country? I quarrelled most bitterly with it at first, finding nothing in the terms of it but disgrace and destruction to Great Britain. But, having learned since that we are already destroyed and disgraced, as much as we can be, I like it better, and think myself deeply indebted to the King of France for treating us with so much lenity. The olive-branch indeed has neither leaf nor fruit, but it is still an olive-branch. Mr. Newton and I have exchanged several letters on the subject; sometimes considering, like grave politicians as we are, the state of Europe at large; sometimes the state of England in particular: sometimes the conduct of the house of Bourbon; sometimes that of the Dutch; but most especially that of the Americans. We have not differed perhaps very widely, nor even so widely as we seemed to do; but still we have differed. We have however managed our dispute with temper, and brought it to a peaceable conclusion. So far at least we have given proof of a wisdom which abler politicians than myself would do well to imitate.

How do you like your northern mountaineers?* Can a man be a good Christian that goes without breeches? You are better qualified to solve me this question than any man I know, having, as I am informed, preached to many of them, and conversed, no doubt, with some. You must know I love a Highlander, and think I can see in them what Englishmen once were, but never will be again. Such have been the effects of luxury!

You know that I kept two hares. I have written nothing since I saw you but an epitaph on one of them, which died last week. I send you the *first* impression of it.

Here lies, &c.†

Believe me, my dear friend, affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.‡

Olney, March 7, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Were my letters composed of materials worthy of your acceptance, they should be longer. There is a subject upon which they who know themselves interested in it are never weary of writing. That subject is not within my reach; and there are few others that do not soon fatigue me. Upon these, however, I might possibly be more diffuse, could I forget that I am writing to *you*, to whom I think it just as improper and absurd to send a sheet full of trifles, as it would be to allow myself that liberty, were I writing to one of the four evangelists. But, since you measure *me* with so much exactness, give me leave to requite you in your own way. *Your* manuscript indeed is close, and I do not reckon *mine* very lax. You make no margin, it is true: if you did, you would have need of their Lilliputian art, who can enclose the creed within the circle of a shilling; for, upon the nicest comparison, I find your paper an inch smaller every way than mine. Were my writing therefore as compact as yours, my letters *with* a margin would

* This anticipation has not been fulfilled. America has produced materials for national greatness, that have laid the foundation of a mighty empire; and both General Washington and Franklin were great men.

† There is a remarkable passage in Herbert's Sacred Poems expressive of this expectation, and indicating the probable period of its fulfilment.

"Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand.
When height of malice, and prodigious lusts,
Impudent sinning, witchcrafts, and distrusts,
The marks of future bane, shall fill our cup
Unto the brim, and make our measure up;
When Sodom shall swallow Tiber, and the Thames,
By letting in them both, pollute her streams;
When Italy of us shall have her will,
And all her calendar of sins fulfil;
Then shall Religion to America flee:
They have their times of Gospel ev'n as we."

Herbert concludes by predicting that Christianity shall then complete its circuit by returning once more to the East, the original source of Empire, of the Arts, and of Religion, and so prepare the way for the final consummation of all things.

‡ Private correspondence.

* Scotch Highlanders, quartered at Newport Pagnel, where Mr. Bull lived

† Vide Cowper's Poems.

‡ Private correspondence.

be as long as yours without one. Let this consideration, added to that of their futility, prevail with you to think them, if not long, yet long enough.

Yesterday a body of Highlanders passed through Olney. They are part of that regiment which lately mutinied at Portsmouth. Convinced to a man that General —— had sold them to the East India Company, they breathe nothing but vengeance, and swear they will pull down his house in Scotland, as soon as they arrive here. The rest of them are quartered at Dunstable, Woburn, and Newport; in all eleven hundred. A party of them, it is said, are to continue some days at Olney. None of their principal officers are with them; either conscious of guilt, or at least knowing themselves to be suspected as privy to and partners in the iniquitous bargain, they fear the resentment of the corps. The design of government seems to be to break them into small divisions, that they may find themselves, when they reach Scotland, too weak to do much mischief.—Forty of them attended Mr. Bull, who found himself singularly happy in an opportunity to address himself to a flock bred upon the Caledonian mountains. He told them he would walk to John O'Groat's house to hear a soldier pray. They are in general so far religious that they will hear none but evangelical preaching; and many of them are said to be truly so. Nevertheless, General ——'s skull was in some danger among them; for he was twiced felled to the ground with the butt end of a musket. The sergeant-major rescued him, or he would have been forever rendered incapable of selling Highlanders to the India Company. I am obliged to you for your extract from Mr. Bowman's letter. I feel myself sensibly pleased by the approbation of men of taste and learning; but that my vanity may not get too much to windward, my spirits are kept under by a total inability to renew my enterprises in the poetical way.

We are tolerably well, and love you both.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 5, 1783.

My dear Friend,—When one has a letter to write, there is nothing more useful than to make a beginning. In the first place, because unless it be begun, there is no good reason to hope it will ever be ended; and secondly, because the beginning is half the business, it being much more difficult to put the pen in motion at first, than to continue the progress of it when once moved.

Mrs. C——'s illness, likely to prove mortal, and seizing her at such a time, has excited much compassion in my breast, and in Mrs. Unwin's, both for her and her daughter. To have parted with a child she loves so much, intending soon to follow her; to find herself arrested before she could set out, and at so great a distance from her most valued relations; her daughter's life too threatened by a disorder not often curable, are circumstances truly affecting. She has indeed much natural fortitude, and, to make her condition still more tolerable, a good Christian hope for her support. But so it is, that the distresses of those who least need our pity excite it most; the amiableness of the character engages our sympathy, and we mourn for persons for whom perhaps we might more reasonably rejoice. There is still however a possibility that she may recover; an event we *must* wish for, though for her to depart would be far better. Thus we would always withhold from the skies those who alone can reach them, at least till we are ready to bear them company.

Present our love, if you please, to Miss C——.* I saw in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for last month, an account of a physician who has discovered a new method of treating consumptive cases, which has succeeded wonderfully in the trial. He finds the seat of the distemper in the stomach, and cures it principally by emetics. The old method of encountering the disorder has proved so unequal to the task, that I should be much inclined to any new practice that comes well recommended. He is spoken of as a sensible and judicious man, but his name I have forgot.

Our love to all under your roof, and in particular to Miss Catlett, if she is with you.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, April 21, 1783.

My dear Friend,—My device was intended to represent, not my own heart, but the heart of a Christian, mourning and yet rejoicing, pierced with thorns, yet wreathed about with roses. I have the thorn without the rose. My briar is a wintry one; the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains. My days are spent in vanity, and it is impossible for me to spend them otherwise. No man upon earth is more sensible of the unprofitableness of a life like mine than I am, or groans more heavily under the burden. The time when I seem to be most rationally employed is when I am reading. My studies however are very much confined, and of little use, because I have no books but what I borrow, and nobody will lend me a memory. My own is almost worn out. I read the Biographia and the Review. If all the readers of the former had memories like mine, the

* Miss Cunningham.

† Private correspondence.

compilers of that work would in vain have labored to rescue the great names of past ages from oblivion, for what I read to day I forget to-morrow. A by-stander might say, This is rather an advantage, the book is always new;—but I beg the by-stander's pardon; I can recollect, though I cannot remember, and with the book in my hand I recognize those passages which, without the book, I should never have thought of more. The Review pleases me most, because, if the contents escape me, I regret them less, being a very supercilious reader of most modern writers. Either I dislike the subject, or the manner of treating it; the style is affected, or the matter is disgusting.

. . . . .

I see —— (though he was a learned man, and sometimes wrote like a wise one,) laboring under invincible prejudices against the truth and its professors; heterodox in his opinions upon some religious subjects, and reasoning most weakly in support of them. How has he toiled to prove that the perdition of the wicked is not eternal, that there may be repentance in hell, and that the devils may be saved at last: thus establishing, as far as in him lies, the belief of a purgatory. When I think of him, I think too of some who shall say hereafter, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wondrous works? Then shall he say unto them, Depart from me, for I never knew you." But perhaps he might be enlightened in his last moments, and saved in the very article of dissolution. It is much to be wished, and indeed hoped, that he was. Such a man reprobated in the great day would be the most melancholy spectacle of all that shall stand at the left hand hereafter. But I do not think that *many*, or indeed *any*, will be found there, who in their lives were sober, virtuous, and sincere, truly pious in the use of their little light, and, though ignorant of God, in comparison with some others, yet, sufficiently informed to know that He is to be feared, loved, and trusted. An operation is often performed within the curtains of a dying bed, in behalf of such men, that the nurse and the doctor (I mean the doctor and the nurse) have no suspicion of. The soul makes but one step out of darkness into light, and makes that step without a witness. My brother's case has made me very charitable in my opinion about the future state of such men.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, May 5, 1783.

You may suppose that I did not hear Mr. —— preach, but I heard of him. How different is that plainness of speech which a spiritual theme requires, from that vulgar dialect which this gentleman has mistaken for it! Affectation of every sort is odious, especially in a minister, and more especially an affectation that betrays him into expressions fit only for the mouths of the illiterate. Truth indeed needs no ornament, neither does a beautiful person; but to clothe it therefore in rags, when a decent habit was at hand, would be esteemed preposterous and absurd. The best-proportioned figure may be made offensive by beggary and filth, and even truths, which came down from heaven, though they cannot forego their nature, may be disguised and disgraced by unsuitable language. It is strange that a pupil of yours should blunder thus. You may be consoled however by reflecting, that he could not have erred so grossly if he had not totally and wilfully departed both from your instruction and example. Were I to describe your style in two words, I should call it plain and neat, *simplicem munditiis*, and I do not know how I could give it juster praise, or pay it a greater compliment. He that speaks to be understood by a congregation of rustics, and yet in terms that would not offend academical ears, has found the happy medium. This is certainly practicable to men of taste and judgment, and the practice of a few proves it. *Hactenus de concionando.*

We are truly glad to hear that Miss Catlett is better, and heartily wish you more promising accounts from Scotland. *Debemur morti nos nostraque.* We all acknowledge the debt, but are seldom pleased when those we love are required to pay it. The demand will find you prepared for it.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 12, 1783.

My dear Friend,—A letter written from such a place as this is a creation; and creation is a work for which mere mortal man is very indifferently qualified. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, is a maxim that applies itself in every case, where Deity is not concerned. With this view of the matter, I should charge myself with extreme folly for pretending to work without materials, did I not know that although nothing could be the result, even that nothing will be welcome. If I can tell you no news, I can tell you at least that I esteem you highly; that my friendship with you and yours is the only balm of my life; a comfort sufficient to reconcile me to an existence destitute of any other. This is not the language of to-day, only the effect of a transient cloud suddenly brought over me, and suddenly to be removed, but punctually expressive of my habitual frame of mind, such as it has been these ten years.

In the "Review" of last month, I met with an account of a sermon preached by Mr. Paley, at the consecration of his friend, Bishop L.* The critic admires and extols the preacher, and devoutly prays the Lord of the harvest to send forth more such laborers into his vineyard. I rather differ from him in opinion, not being able to conjecture in what respect the vineyard will be benefited by such a measure. He is certainly ingenious, and has stretched his ingenuity to the uttermost, in order to exhibit the church established, consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons, in the most favorable point of view. I lay it down for a rule that when much ingenuity is necessary to gain an argument credit, that argument is unsound at bottom. So is his, and so are all the petty devices by which he seeks to enforce it. He says first, "that the appointment of various orders in the church is attended with this good consequence, that each class of people is supplied with a clergy of their own level and description, with whom they may live and associate on terms of equality." But, in order to effect this good purpose, there ought to be at least three parsons in every parish, one for the gentry, one for traders and mechanics, and one for the lowest of the vulgar. Neither is it easy to find many parishes, where the laity at large have any society with their minister at all. This therefore is fanciful, and a mere invention: in the next place he says it gives a dignity to the ministry itself, and the clergy share in the respect paid to their superiors. Much good may such participation do them! They themselves know how little it amounts to. The dignity a parson derives from the lawn sleeves and square cap of his diocesan will never endanger his humility.

Pope says truly—

> Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
> The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Again—"Rich and splendid situations in the church have been justly regarded as prizes, held out to invite persons of good hopes and ingenuous attainments." Agreed. But the prize held out in the Scripture is of a very different kind; and our ecclesiastical baits are too often snapped by the worthless, and persons of no attainments at all. They are indeed incentives to avarice and ambition, but not to those acquirements, by which only the ministerial function can be adorned—zeal for the salvation of men, humility, and self-denial. Mr. Paley and I therefore cannot agree.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

We think Cowper has treated Paley, as well as his subject, with no small portion of severity. What Paley's arguments may have been, in establishing his first position, we know not, but we should have expected that the poet would have admitted the principle, however he might have disapproved of the comment. There was a time when the proper constitution of a Christian Church furnished a subject of inquiry that engaged the councils of princes, convulsed this empire to its basis, and left the traces of an awful desolation behind. We allude to the times of Charles the First, and to the momentous events that characterized that period. In the present age, the matters in dispute are greatly changed. The important question now agitated is the lawfulness of the union of church and state, so far as that lawfulness is decided by an appeal to the authority of Scripture. Upon this subject it is not our intention to enter. For able and masterly argument, in defence of establishments, we beg to refer to the work of Dr. Chalmers,* and to the two last Visitation Charges of Chancellor Dealtry. We trust, however, that we may be allowed to express our deep conviction that the timely removal of abuses is not only essential to the efficiency and preservation of the church of England, but also imperatively due to our own honor and credit, to the glory of God, and to the advancement of true religion.

In the meantime we would appeal to every intelligent observer, whether there has ever been a period in the annals of our church, more characterized by an acknowledged increase of true piety than in the era in which we are now writing?—whether there is not a perceptible revival of sound doctrine in our pulpits, and of devotedness and zeal in the lives of the clergy? Appealing then to these facts, which he that runneth may read, may we not, though in the spirit of profound humiliation, exclaim with the wife of Manoah, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands: neither would he have showed us all these things; nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these."†

Let, then, the sacred edifice be suffered to remain, built as it is on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: but let what time hath impaired, or infirmity hath disfigured, be restored and amended. And let this be the language of her friends, as well as of every honorable and conscientious opponent, which was once expressed by the celebrated Beza: "If now the reformed churches of England, administered by the authority of bishops and archbishops, do hold on, as this hath happened to that church in our memory, that she hath had men of that calling, not only most notable martyrs of God, but also

* Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle.

* See Dr. Chalmers on Establishments.

† Judges xiii. 23.

excellent pastors and doctors: let her, in God's name, enjoy this singular bounty of God, which I wish she may hold forever."*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, May 26, 1783.

I feel for my uncle, and do not wonder that his loss afflicts him. A connexion that has subsisted so many years, could not be rent asunder without great pain to the survivor. I hope, however, and doubt not, but when he has had a little more time for recollection, he will find that consolation in his own family, which it is not the lot of every father to be blessed with. It seldom happens that married persons live together so long, or so happily; but this, which one feels one's self ready to suggest as matter of alleviation, is the very circumstance that aggravates his distress; therefore he misses her the more and feels that he can but ill spare her. It is, however, a necessary tax, which all who live long must pay for their longevity, to lose many whom they would be glad to detain (perhaps those in whom all their happiness is centred), and to see them step into the grave before them. In one respect, at least, this is a merciful appointment. When life has lost that to which it owed its principal relish, we may ourselves the more cheerfully resign it. I beg you would present him with my most affectionate remembrance, and tell him, if you think fit, how much I wish that the evening of his long day may be serene and happy. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, May 31, 1783.

We rather rejoice than mourn with you on the occasion of Mrs C——'s death. In the case of believers, death has lost his sting, not only with respect to those he takes away, but with respect to survivors also. Nature indeed will always suggest some causes of sorrow, when an amiable and Christian friend departs, but the Scripture so many more and so much more important reasons to rejoice, that, on such occasions, perhaps more remarkably than on any other, sorrow is turned into joy. The law of our land is affronted if we say the king dies, and insists on it that he only demises. This, which is a fiction where a monarch only is in question, in the case of a Christian is reality and truth. He only lays aside a body which it is his privilege to be encumbered with no longer; and instead of dying, in that moment he begins to live. But this the world does not understand, therefore the kings of it must go on demising to the end of the chapter. W. C.

* "Fruatur sanè istâ singulari Dei beneficentiâ, quæ utinam illi sit perpetua."—*Bez. Resp. ad Sarav.* p. 111.

† Ashley Cowper, Esq., who had recently lost his wife.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.*

Olney, June 3, 1783.

My dear Friend,—My greenhouse fronted with myrtles, and where I hear nothing but the pattering of a fine shower and the sound of distant thunder, wants only the fumes of your pipe to make it perfectly delightful. Tobacco was not known in the golden age. So much the worse for the golden age. This age of iron or lead would be insupportable without it; and, therefore, we may reasonably suppose, that the happiness of those better days would have been much improved by the use of it. We hope that you and your son are perfectly recovered. The season has been most unfavorable to animal life; and I, who am merely animal, have suffered much by it.

Though I should be glad to write, I write little or nothing. The time for such fruit is not yet come; but I expect it, and I wish for it. I want amusement, and, deprived of that, have nothing to supply the place of it. I send you, however, according to my promise to send you everything, two stanzas, composed at the request of Lady Austen. She wanted words to a tune she much admired, and I wrote her the following,—

ON PEACE.

No longer I follow a sound, &c.†

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, June 8, 1783.

My dear William,—Our severest winter, commonly called the spring, is now over, and I find myself seated in my favorite recess, the greenhouse. In such a situation, so silent, so shady, where no human foot is heard, and where only my myrtles presume to peep in at the window, you may suppose I have no interruption to complain of, and that my thoughts are perfectly at my command. But the beauties of the spot are themselves an interruption, my attention being called upon by those very myrtles, by a double row of grass pinks, just beginning to blossom, and by a bed of beans already in bloom; and you are to consider it, if you please, as no small proof of my regard, that, though you have so many powerful rivals, I disengage myself from them all, and devote this hour entirely to you.

You are not acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Bull of Newport—perhaps it is as well for you that you are not. You would regret still more than you do, that there are so many miles interposed between us. He spends part of the day with us to-morrow.

* Private correspondence.

‡ Vide Poems.

A dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters, and of genius; master of a fine imagination, or rather not master of it—an imagination which, when he finds himself in the company he loves, and can confide in, runs away with him into such fields of speculation, as amuse and enliven every other imagination that has the happiness to be of the party! at other times he has a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way. No men are better qualified for companions in such a world as this than men of such a temperament. Every scene of life has two sides, a dark and a bright one, and the mind that has an equal mixture of melancholy and vivacity is best of all qualified for the contemplation of either. He can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection. Such a man is Mr. Bull. But—he smokes tobacco—nothing is perfect——

Nihil est ab omni
Parte beatum.

On the other side I send you a something, a song if you please, composed last Thursday: the incident happened the day before.*

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, June 13, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for your Dutch communications. The suffrage of such respectable men must have given you much pleasure, a pleasure only to be exceeded by the consciousness you had before of having published truth, and of having served a good master by doing so.

I have always regretted that your ecclesiastical history went no further: I never saw a work that I thought more likely to serve the cause of truth, nor history applied to so good a purpose.† The facts incontestable, the grand observation upon them all irrefragable, and the style, in my judgment, incomparably better than that of Robertson or Gibbon. I would give you my reasons for thinking so, if I had not a very urgent one for declining it. You have no ear for such music, whoever may be the performer. What you added, but never printed, is quite equal to what has appeared, which I think might have encouraged you to proceed, though you missed that freedom in writing which you found before. While you were at Olney, this was at least possible: in a state of retirement you had leisure, without which I suppose Paul himself could not have written his epistles. But those days are fled, and every hope of a continuation is fled with them.

The day of judgment is spoken of not only as a surprise, but a snare, a snare upon all the inhabitants of the earth. A difference indeed will obtain in favor of the godly, which is, that though a snare, a sudden, in some sense an unexpected, and in every sense an awful, event, yet it will find *them* prepared to meet it. But, the day being thus characterized, a wide field is consequently open to conjecture; some will look for it at one period, and some at another; we shall most of us prove at last to have been mistaken, and if any should prove to have guessed aright, they will reap no advantage, the felicity of their conjecture being incapable of proof, till the day itself shall prove it. My own sentiments upon the subject appear to me perfectly scriptural, though I have no doubt that they differ totally from those of all who have ever thought about it, being however so singular, and of no importance to the happiness of mankind, and being moreover difficult to swallow just in proportion as they are peculiar, I keep them to myself.

I am and always have been a great observer of natural appearances, but I think not a superstitious one. The fallibility of those speculations which lead men of fanciful minds to interpret scripture by the contingencies of the day, is evident from this consideration, that what the God of the scriptures has seen fit to conceal he will not as the God of nature publish. He is one and the same in both capacities, and consistent with himself and his purpose, if he designs a secret impenetrable in whatever way we attempt to open it. It is impossible however for an observer of natural phenomena not to be struck with the singularity of the present season. The fogs I mentioned in my last still continue, though till yesterday the earth was as dry as intense heat could make it. The sun continues to rise and set without his rays, and hardly shines at noon, even in a cloudless sky. At eleven last night the moon was a dull red; she was nearly at her highest elevation, and had the color of heated brick. She would naturally, I know, have such an appearance looking through a misty atmosphere, but that such an atmosphere should obtain for so long a time, in a country where it has not happened in my remembrance, even in winter, is rather remarkable. We have had more thunder-storms than have consisted well with the peace of the fearful maidens in Olney, though not so many as have happened in

* Here followed his song of "The Rose."

† Newton's "Review of Ecclesiastical History," so far as it proceeded, was much esteemed ,but was incomplete. It had the merit, however, of suggesting to the Rev. Joseph Milner the first idea of his own more enlarged and valuable undertaking, on the same subject. In this work the excellent author pursued the design executed in part by Newton. Instead of exhibiting the history of Christianity as a mere record of facts and events, he traced the rise and progress of true religion, and its preservation through successive ages; and thus afforded an incontestable evidence of the superintending power and faithfulness of God.

places at no great distance, nor so violent. Yesterday morning however, at seven o'clock, two fire-balls burst either on the steeple or close to it. William Andrews saw them meet at that point, and immediately after saw such a smoke issue from the apertures in the steeple, as soon rendered it invisible; the noise of the explosion surpassed all the noises I ever heard; you would have thought that a thousand sledge-hammers were battering great stones to powder, all in the same instant. The weather is still as hot, and the air is full of vapor, as if there had been neither rain nor thunder all the summer.

There was once a periodical paper published, called Mist's Journal: a name well adapted to the sheet before you. Misty however as I am, I do not mean to be mystical, but to be understood, like an almanac-maker, according to the letter. As a poet nevertheless, I claim, if any wonderful event should follow, a right to apply all and every such post-prognostic to the purposes of the tragic muse.

Yours, W. C.

It is worthy of being recorded that these singular appearances presented by the atmosphere and heavens, with accompanying thunder-storms, were prevalent in many parts of England. At Dover, the fog was of such long continuance, that the opposite shore could not be discerned for three weeks. In other places the storms of thunder and lightning were awful, and destructive both to life and property. But this phenomenon was not confined to England only; it extended to France, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Spain, and even to some parts of Africa. In Paris, the appearances were so portentous, and the alarm so considerable, that the great astronomer Lalande addressed a letter to one of the journals, in order to compose the public mind. We subjoin it in a note for the gratification of the reader, and as illustrating his views on the subject.* In the preceding February occurred the calamitous earthquakes in Calabria and Sicily;* by which solemn catastrophe the city of Messina was overthrown, and the greater portion of its population, consisting of thirty thousand souls, wholly destroyed. This awful event was preceded by an horizon full of black intense fog, the earthquake next followed, with two successive shocks, and subsequently a whirlpool of fire issued from the earth, which completed the entire destruction of the noble and great edifices that still remained. We refer the reader for the terrible details of this afflicting calamity to the narrative of Sir William Hamilton, which cannot be read without alarm and terror. Nor can we omit the following just and impressive moral from the pen of Cowper.

What then! were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast anchor'd isle
Mov'd not, while theirs was rock'd, like a light skiff.
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark;
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,
Tremble and be amaz'd at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee.

Task, book ii.

* "It is known to you that for some days past people have been incessantly inquiring what is the occasion of the thick dry fog which almost constantly covers the heavens? And, as this question is particularly put to astronomers, I think myself obliged to say a few words on the subject, more especially since a kind of terror begins to spread in society. It is said by some, that the disasters in Calabria were preceded by similar weather; and by others, that a dangerous comet reigns at present. In 1773 I experienced how fast conjectures of this kind, which begin amongst the ignorant, even in the most enlightened ages, proceed from mouth to mouth, till they reach the best societies, and find their way even to the public prints. The multitude, therefore, may easily be supposed to draw strange conclusions, when they see the sun of a blood color, shed a melancholy light, and cause a most sultry heat.

"This, however, is nothing more than a very natural effect from a hot sun, after a long succession of heavy rain. The first impression of heat has necessarily and suddenly rarefied a superabundance of watery particles with which the earth was deeply impregnated, and given them, as they rose, a dimness and rarefaction not usual to common fogs. "DE LA LANDE."

The danger to which men of philosophical minds seem to be peculiarly exposed is the habit of accounting for the phenomena of nature too exclusively by the operation of mere secondary causes; while the supreme agency of a first Great Cause is too much overlooked. The universality of these appearances occurring at the same time in England, France, Italy, and so many other countries, awakens reflections of a more solemn cast, in a mind imbued with Christian principles. He who reads Professor Barruel's work, and the concurring testimony adduced by Robinson, as to the extent of infidelity and even atheism, gathering at that time in the different states of Europe, might, we think, see in these signs in the moon, and in the stars, and in the heavens, some intimations of impending judgments, which followed so shortly after; and evidences of the power and existence of that God, which many so impiously questioned and defied.

* Cowper has selected this awful catastrophe for the exercise of his poetic powers. His mind seems to have been impregnated with the grandeur of the theme, which he has presented to the imagination of the reader with all the accuracy of historic detail. We quote the following extracts.

"Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
Lie scatter'd, where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. . . .
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise—
. . . . The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted; and with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridg'd so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possessed an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,
Look'd to the sea for safety?—They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people!"

Task, book ii.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, June 17, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Your letter reached Mr. S—— while Mr. —— was with him: whether it wrought any change in *his* opinion of that gentleman, as a preacher, I know not; but for my own part I give you full credit for the soundness and rectitude of *yours*. No man was ever scolded out of his sins. The heart, corrupt as it is, and because it is so, grows angry if it be not treated with some management and good manners, and scolds again. A surly mastiff will bear perhaps to be stroked, though he will growl even under that operation, but, if you touch him roughly, he will bite. There is no grace that the spirit of self can counterfeit with more success than a religious zeal. A man thinks he is fighting for Christ, and he is fighting for his own notions. He thinks that he is skilfully searching the hearts of others, when he is only gratifying the malignity of his own, and charitably supposes his hearers destitute of all grace, that he may shine the more in his own eyes by comparison. When he has performed this notable task, he wonders that they are not converted, "he has given it them soundly," and if they do not tremble and confess that God is in him of a truth, he gives them up as reprobate, incorrigible, and lost forever. But a man that loves me, if he sees me in an error, will pity me, and endeavor calmly to convince me of it, and persuade me to forsake it. If he has great and good news to tell me, he will not do it angrily, and in much heat and discomposure of spirit. It is not therefore easy to conceive on what ground a minister can justify a conduct which only proves that he does not understand his errand. The absurdity of it would certainly strike him, if he were not himself deluded.

A people will always love a minister, if a minister seems to love his people. The old maxim, *Simile agit in simile*, is in no case more exactly verified; therefore you were beloved at Olney, and, if you preached to the Chicksaws and Chactaws, would be equally beloved by them.

W. C.

Tenderness in a minister is a very important qualification, and indispensable to his success. The duty of it is enjoined in an apostolical precept, and the wisdom of it inculcated in another passage of scripture. "Speaking the truth in love." "He that winneth souls is wise." We have often thought that one reason why a larger portion of divine blessing fails to accompany the ministrations of the sanctuary, is the want of more affectionate expostulation, more earnest entreaty, and more tenderness and sympathy in the preacher. The heart that is unmoved by our reproof may perhaps yield to the persuasiveness of our appeal. We fully admit that it is divine grace alone that can subdue the power of sin in the soul; but in the whole economy of grace, as well as of Providence, there is always perceptible a wise adaptation of means to the end. Who is not impressed by the tenderness and earnest solicitations of St. Paul? Who can contemplate the Saviour weeping over Jerusalem, without emotions of the profoundest admiration? And who does not know that the spectacle of man's misery and guilt first suggested the great plan of redemption, and that the scheme of mercy which divine love devised in heaven dying love accomplished on earth?

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, June 19, 1783.

My dear Friend,—The translation of your letters* into *Dutch* was news that pleased me *much*. I intended plain prose, but a rhyme obtruded itself, and I became poetical when I least expected it. When you wrote those letters, you did not dream that you were designed for an apostle to the Dutch. Yet, so it proves, and such among many others are the advantages we derive from the art of printing—an art in which indisputably man was instructed by the same great Teacher, who taught him to embroider for the service of the sanctuary, and which amounts almost to as great a blessing as the gift of tongues.

The summer is passing away, and hitherto has hardly been either seen or felt. Perpetual clouds intercept the influence of the sun, and for the most part there is an autumnal coldness in the weather, though we are almost upon the eve of the longest day.

We are well, and always mindful of you: be mindful of us, and assured that we love you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 27, 1783.

My dear Friend.—You cannot have more pleasure in receiving a letter from me than I should find in writing it, were it not almost impossible in such a place to find a subject.

I live in a world abounding with incidents, upon which many grave and perhaps some profitable observations might be made; but, those incidents never reaching my unfortunate ears, both the entertaining narrative, and the reflection it might suggest, are to me annihilated and lost. I look back to the past week and say, what did it produce? I ask

* Newton's "Cardiphonia," a work of great merit and interest, and full of edification.

the same question of the week preceding, and duly receive the same answer from both —nothing! A situation like this, in which I am as unknown to the world as I am ignorant of all that passes in it, in which I have nothing to do but to think, would exactly suit me, were my subject of meditation as agreeable as my leisure is uninterrupted: my passion for retirement is not at all abated, after so many years spent in the most sequestered state, but rather increased. A circumstance I should esteem wonderful to a degree not to be accounted for, considering the condition of my mind, did I not know that we think as we are made to think, and of course approve and prefer as Providence, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, chooses for us. Thus I am both free and a prisoner at the same time. The world is before me; I am not shut up in the Bastile; there are no moats about my castle, no locks upon my gates, of which I have not the key—but an invisible, uncontrollable agency, a local attachment, an inclination more forcible than I ever felt, even to the place of my birth, serves me for prison-walls, and for bounds which I cannot pass. In former years I have known sorrow, and before I had ever tasted of spiritual trouble. The effect was an abhorrence of the scene in which I had suffered so much, and a weariness of those objects which I had so long looked at with an eye of despondency and dejection. But it is otherwise with me now. The same cause subsisting, and in a much more powerful degree, fails to produce its natural effect. The very stones in the garden-walls are my intimate acquaintance. I should miss almost the minutest object, and be disagreeably affected by its removal, and am persuaded that, were it possible I could leave this incommodious nook for a twelvemonth, I should return to it again with rapture, and be transported with the sight of objects, which to all the world beside would be at least indifferent: some of them, perhaps, such as the ragged thatch and the tottering walls of the neighboring cottages, disgusting. But so it is, and it is so, because here is to be my abode, and because such is the appointment of *Him* that placed me in it.

> Iste terrarum mihi præter omnes
> Angulus ridet.

It is the place of all the world I love the most, not for any happiness it affords me, but because here I can be miserable with most convenience to myself, and with the least disturbance to others.

You wonder, and (I dare say) unfeignedly, because you do not think yourself entitled to such praise, that I prefer your style, as an historian, to that of the two most renowned writers of history the present day has seen. That you may not suspect me of having said more than my real opinion will warrant, I will tell you why. In your style I see no affectation, in every line of theirs I see nothing else. They disgust me always; Robertson with his pomp and his strut, and Gibbon with his finical and French manners. You are as correct as they. You express yourself with as much precision. Your words are ranged with as much propriety, but you do not set your periods to a tune. They discover a perpetual desire to exhibit themselves to advantage, whereas your subject engrosses you. They sing, and you say; which, as history is a thing to be said and not sung, is in my judgment very much to your advantage. A writer that despises their tricks, and is yet neither inelegant nor inharmonious, proves himself, by that single circumstance, a man of superior judgment and ability to them both. You have my reasons. I honor a manly character, in which good sense and a desire of doing good are the predominant features—but affectation is an emetic.

W. C.

It is impossible to read the former part of the preceding letter without emotion. Who has not felt the force of local associations, and their power of presenting affecting recollections to the mind!

"I could not bear," says Pope, in one of his letters, "to have even an old post removed out of the way with which my eyes had been familiar from my youth."

Among the Swiss, the force of association is so strong, that it is known by the appellation of the "maladie du pays;" and it is recorded that on hearing one of their national airs in a foreign land, so overpowering was the effect that, though engaged in warfare at the time, they threw down their arms and returned to their own country. The emotions awakened by some of the Swiss airs, such as the "Rantz des Vaches," and the affecting pathos of "La Suissesse au bord du lac," when heard on their native lakes, are always remembered by the traveller with delight. The feelings of a still higher kind connected with local associations are expressed with so much grace and eloquence in Dr. Johnson's celebrated allusion to this subject, that we close our remarks by inserting the passage,—

"We were now treading that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavored, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the

present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and far from my friends be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."*

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Aug. 4, 1783.

My dear William,—I feel myself sensibly obliged by the interest you take in the success of my productions. Your feelings upon the subject are such as I should have myself, had I an opportunity of calling Johnson aside to make the inquiry you propose. But I am pretty well prepared for the worst, and so long as I have the opinion of a few capable judges in my favor, and am thereby convinced that I have neither disgraced myself nor my subject, shall not feel myself disposed to any extreme anxiety about the sale. To aim, with success, at the spiritual good of mankind, and to become popular by writing on scriptural subjects, were an unreasonable ambition, even for a poet to entertain in days like these. Verse may have many charms, but has none powerful enough to conquer the aversion of a dissipated age to such instruction. Ask the question therefore boldly, and be not mortified, even though he should shake his head, and drop his chin; for it is no more than we have reason to expect. We will lay the fault upon the vice of the times, and we will acquit the poet.

I am glad you were pleased with my Latin ode, and indeed with my English dirge as much as I was myself. The tune laid me under a disadvantage, obliging me to write in Alexandrines; which, I suppose, would suit no ear but a French one; neither did I intend anything more than that the subject and the words should be sufficiently accommodated to the music. The ballad is a species of poetry, I believe, peculiar to this country, equally adapted to the drollest and the most tragical subjects. Simplicity and ease are its proper characteristics. Our forefathers excelled in it; but we moderns have lost the art. It is observed, that we have few good English odes. But, to make amends, we have many excellent ballads, not inferior, perhaps, in true poetical merit to some of the very best odes that the Greek or Latin languages have to boast of. It is a sort of composition I was ever fond of, and, if graver matters had not called me another way, should have addicted myself to it more than to any other. I inherit a taste for it from my father, who succeeded well in it himself, and who lived at a time when the best pieces in that way were produced. What can be prettier than Gay's ballad, or rather Swift's, Arbuthnot's, Pope's, and Gay's, in the What do ye call it—"'Twas when the seas were roaring." I have been well informed that they all contributed, and that the most celebrated association of clever fellows this country ever saw, did not think it beneath them to unite their strength and abilities in the composition of a song. The success, however, answered their wishes. The ballads that Bourne has translated, beautiful in themselves, are still more beautiful in his version of them, infinitely surpassing in my judgment all that Ovid or Tibullus have left behind them. They are quite as elegant, and far more touching and pathetic, than the tenderest strokes of either.

So much for ballads and ballad-writers.—"A worthy subject," you will say, "for a man whose head might be filled with better things;"—and it is filled with better things, but to so ill a purpose, that I thrust into it all manner of topics that may prove more amusing; as, for instance, I have two goldfinches, which in the summer occupy the greenhouse. A few days since, being employed in cleaning out their cages, I placed that which I had in hand upon the table, while the other hung against the wall: the windows and the doors stood wide open. I went to fill the fountain at the pump, and, on my return, was not a little surprised to find a goldfinch sitting on the top of the cage I had been cleaning, and singing to and kissing the goldfinch within. I approached him, and he discovered no fear; still nearer, and he discovered none. I advanced my hand towards him, and he took no notice of it. I seized him, and supposed I had caught a new bird, but, casting my eye upon the other cage, perceived my mistake. Its inhabitant, during my absence, had contrived to find an opening, where the wire had been a little bent, and made no other use of the escape it afforded him than to salute his friend, and to converse with him more intimately than he had done before. I returned him to his proper mansion, but in vain. In less than a minute, he had thrust his little person through the aperture again, and again perched upon his neighbor's cage, kissing him, as at the first, and singing, as if transported with the fortunate adventure. I could not but respect such friendship, as for the sake of its gratification, had twice declined an opportunity to be free, and consenting to their union, resolved that for the future one cage should hold them both. I am glad of such incidents. For at a pinch, and when I need entertainment, the versification of them serves to divert me.

* See his journey to the Western Islands.

I transcribe for you a piece of Madam Guion, not as the best, but as being shorter than many, and as good as most of them.

Yours ever, W. C.

The following letter contains a judicious and excellent critique on the writings of Madame Guion, and on the school of mystics to which she belonged. The defect attributed to that school is too much familiarity of address, and a warmth of devotional fervor in their approach to the Deity, exceeding the bounds of just propriety. There is, however, much to quicken piety, and to elevate the affections of the heart.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 7, 1783.

My dear Friend,—So long a silence needs an apology. I have been hindered by a three-weeks' visit from our Hoxton friends,* and by a cold and feverish complaint which are but just removed.

The French poetess is certainly chargeable with the fault you mention, though I thought it not, so glaring in the piece I sent you. I have endeavored indeed, in all the translations I have made, to cure her of that evil, either by the suppression of passages exceptionable upon that account, or by a more sober and respectful manner of expression. Still, however, she will be found to have conversed familiarly with God, but I hope not fulsomely, nor so as to give reasonable disgust to a religious reader. That God should deal familiarly with man, or, which is the same thing, that he should permit man to deal familiarly with him, seems not very difficult to conceive, or presumptuous to suppose, when some things are taken into consideration. Woe to the sinner, that shall dare to take a liberty with him that is not warranted by his word, or to which he himself has not encouraged him. When he assumed man's nature, he revealed himself as the friend of man, as the brother of every soul that loves him. He conversed freely with man while he was on earth, and as freely with him after his resurrection. I doubt not, therefore, that it is possible to enjoy an access to him even now, unincumbered with ceremonious awe, easy, delightful, and without constraint. This, however, can only be the lot of those who make it the business of their lives to please him, and to cultivate communion with him. And then I presume there can be no danger of offence, because such a habit of the soul is of his own creation, and, near as we come, we come no nearer to him than he is pleased to draw us. If we address him as children, it is because he tells us he is our father. If we unbosom ourselves to him as to a friend, it is because he calls us friends, and if we speak to him in the language of love, it is because he first used it, thereby teaching us that it is the language he delights to hear from his people. But I confess that, through the weakness, the folly, and corruption of human nature, this privilege, like all other Christian privileges, is liable to abuse. There is a mixture of evil in everything we do; indulgence encourages us to encroach; and, while we exercise the rights of children, we become childish. Here I think is the point in which my authoress failed, and here it is that I have particularly guarded my translation, not afraid of representing her as dealing with God familiarly, but foolishly, irreverently, and without due attention to his majesty, of which she is somewhat guilty. A wonderful fault for such a woman to fall into, who spent her life in the contemplation of his glory, who seems to have been alway impressed with a sense of it, and sometimes quite absorbed by the views she had of it.

W. C.

* Mr. and Mrs. Newton.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Sept. 8, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Mrs. Unwin would have answered your kind note from Bedford, had not a pain in her side prevented her. I, who am her secretary upon such occasions, should certainly have answered it for her, but was hindered by illness, having been myself seized with a fever immediately after your departure. The account of your recovery gave us great pleasure, and I am persuaded that you will feel yourself repaid by the information that I give you of mine. The reveries your head was filled with, while your disorder was most prevalent, though they were but reveries, and the offspring of a heated imagination, afforded you yet a comfortable evidence of the predominant bias of your heart and mind to the best subjects. I had none such—indeed I was in no degree delirious, nor has anything less than a fever really dangerous ever made me so. In this respect, if in no other, I may be said to have a strong head, and, perhaps, for the same reason that wine would never make me drunk, an ordinary degree of fever has no effect upon my understanding. The epidemic begins to be more mortal as the autumn comes on, and in Bedfordshire it is reported, how truly I cannot say, to be nearly as fatal as the plague. I heard lately of a clerk in a public office, whose chief employment it was for many years to administer oaths, who being light-headed in a fever, of which he died, spent the last week of his life, in crying day and night—"So help you God—kiss the book—give me a

shilling." What a wretch in comparison with you!

Mr. Scott has been ill almost ever since you left us, and last Saturday, as on many foregoing Saturdays, was obliged to clap on a blister by way of preparation for his Sunday labors. He cannot draw breath upon any other terms. If holy orders were always conferred upon such conditions, I question but even bishopries themselves would want an occupant. But he is easy and cheerful.

I beg you will mention me kindly to Mr. Bacon, and make him sensible that if I did not write the paragraph he wished for, it was not owing to any want of respect for the desire he expressed, but to mere inability. If, in a state of mind that almost disqualifies me for society, I could possibly wish to form a new connexion, I should wish to know him; but I never shall, and, things being as they are, I do not regret it. You are my old friend, therefore I do not spare you; having known you in better days, I make you pay for any pleasure I might then afford you by a communication of my present pains. But I have no claims of this sort upon Mr. Bacon.

Be pleased to remember us both, with much affection, to Mrs. Newton, and to her and your Eliza: to Miss C——,* likewise, if she is with you. Poor Eliza droops and languishes; but in the land to which she is going, she will hold up her head and droop no more. A sickness that leads the way to everlasting life is better than the health of an antediluvian. Accept our united love.

My dear friend, sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, Sept. 15, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I have been lately more dejected and more distressed than usual; more harassed by dreams in the night, and more deeply poisoned by them in the following day. I know not what is portended by an alteration for the worse after eleven years of misery; but firmly believe that it is not designed as the introduction of a change for the better. You know not what I suffered while you were here, nor was there any need you should. Your friendship for me would have made you in some degree a partaker of my woes; and your share in them would have been increased by your inability to help me. Perhaps, indeed, they took a keener edge from the consideration of your presence. The friend of my heart, the person with whom I had formerly taken sweet counsel, no longer useful to me as a minister, no longer pleasant to me as a Christian, was a spectacle that must necessarily add the bitterness of mortification to the sadness of despair. I now see a long winter before me, and am to get through it as I can. I know the ground before I tread upon it. It is hollow: it is agitated; it suffers shocks in every direction; it is like the soil of Calabria—all whirlpool and undulation.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Sept. 23, 1783.

My dear Friend,—We are glad that, having been attacked by a fever, which has often proved fatal, and almost always leaves the sufferer debilitated to the last degree, you find yourself so soon restored to health, and your strength recovered. *Your* health and strength are useful to others, and, in that view, important in *his* account who dispenses both, and by your means a more precious gift than either. For my own part, though I have not been laid up, I have never been perfectly well since you left us. A smart fever, which lasted indeed but a few hours, succeeded by lassitude and want of spirits that seemed still to indicate a feverish habit, has made for some time, and still makes me very unfit for my favorite occupations, writing and reading: so that even a letter, and even a letter to you, is not without its burden.

John —— has had the epidemic, and has it still, but grows better. When he was first seized with it, he gave notice that he should die, but in this only instance of prophetic exertion he seems to have been mistaken: he has, however, been very near it. I should have told you that poor John has been very ready to depart, and much comforted through his whole illness. He, you know, though a silent, has been a very steady professor. He indeed fights battles and gains victories, but makes no noise. Europe is not astonished at his feats, foreign academies do not seek him for a member, he will never discover the art of flying, or send a globe of taffeta up to heaven. But he will go thither himself.

Since you went, we dined with Mr. ——. I had sent him notice of our visit a week before, which, like a contemplative studious man as he is, he put in his pocket and forgot. When we arrived, the parlor windows were shut, and the house had the appearance of being uninhabited. After waiting some time, however, the maid opened the door, and the master presented himself. It is hardly worth while to observe so repeatedly, that his garden seems a spot contrived only for the growth of melancholy, but being always affected by it in the same way, I cannot help it. He showed me a nook, in which he had placed a bench, and where he said he found it very refreshing to smoke his pipe and me-

* The young lady here alluded to is Miss Eliza Cunningham, a niece of Mr. Newton's.

† Private correspondence.

ditate. Here he sits with his back against one brick wall and his nose against another, which must, you know, be very refreshing, and greatly assist meditation. He rejoices the more in this niche, because it is an acquisition made at some expense, and with no small labor: several loads of earth were removed in order to make it, which loads of earth, had I the management of them, I should carry thither again, and fill up a place more fit in appearance to be a repository for the dead than the living. I would on no account put any man out of conceit with his innocent enjoyments, and therefore never tell him my thoughts upon this subject; but he is not seldom low-spirited, and I cannot but suspect that his situation helps to make him so.

I shall be obliged to you for Hawkesworth's Voyages when it can be sent conveniently. The long evenings are beginning, and nothing shortens them so effectually as reading aloud.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 29, 1783.

My dear William,—We are sorry that you and your household partake so largely of the ill effects of this unhealthy season. You are happy, however, in having hitherto escaped the epidemic fever which has prevailed much in this part of the kingdom, and carried many off. Your mother and I are well. After more than a fortnight's indisposition, which slight appellation is quite inadequate to the description of all I suffered, I am at length restored by a grain or two of emetic tartar. It is a tax I generally pay in autumn. By this time, I hope, a purer ether than we have seen for months, and these brighter suns than the summer had to boast, have cheered your spirits, and made your existence more comfortable. We are rational: but we are animal too; and therefore subject to the influences of the weather. The cattle in the fields show evident symptoms of lassitude and disgust in an unpleasant season; and we, their lords and masters, are constrained to sympathize with them: the only difference between us is, that they know not the cause of their dejection, and we do, but, for our humiliation, are equally at a loss to cure it. Upon this account I have sometimes wished myself a philosopher. How happy, in comparison with myself, does the sagacious investigator of nature seem, whose fancy is ever employed in the invention of *hypotheses*, and his reason in the support of them! While he is accounting for the origin of the winds, he has no leisure to attend to their influence upon himself; and, while he considers what the sun is made of, forgets that he has not shone for a month. One project, indeed, supplants another. The *vortices* of Descartes gave way to the gravitation of Newton, and this again is threatened by the electrical fluid of a modern.* One generation blows bubbles, and the next breaks them. But in the meantime your philosopher is a happy man. He escapes a thousand inquietudes to which the indolent are subject, and finds his occupation, whether it be the pursuit of a butterfly or a demonstration, the wholesomest exercise in the world. As he proceeds, he applauds himself. His discoveries, though eventually perhaps they prove but dreams, are to him realities. The world gaze at him as he does at new phenomena in the heavens, and perhaps understand him as little. But this does not prevent their praises, nor at all disturb him in the enjoyment of that self-complacence, to which his imaginary success entitles him. He wears his honors while he lives, and, if another strips them off when he has been dead a century, it is no great matter; he can then make shift without them.

I have said a great deal upon this subject, and know not what it all amounts to. I did not intend a syllable of it when I began. But, *currente calamo*, I stumbled upon it. My end is to amuse myself and you. The former of these two points is secured. I shall be happy if I do not miss the latter.

By the way, what is your opinion of these air balloons? I am quite charmed with the discovery. Is it not possible (do you suppose?) to convey such a quantity of inflammable air into the stomach and abdomen, that the philosopher, no longer gravitating to a centre, shall ascend by his own comparative levity, and never stop till he has reached the medium exactly *in equilibrio* with himself? May he not, by the help of a pasteboard rudder attached to his posteriors, steer himself in that purer element with ease, and again by a slow and gradual discharge of his aerial contents, recover his former tendency to the earth, and descend without the smallest danger or inconvenience? These things are worth inquiry, and (I dare say) they will be inquired after as they deserve: the *pennæ non homini datæ* are likely to be less regretted than they were; and perhaps a flight of academicians and a covey of fine ladies may be no uncommon spectacle in the next generation. A letter which appeared in the public prints last week convinces me that the learned are not without hopes of some such improvement upon this discovery. The author is a sensible and ingenious man, and, under a reasonable apprehension that the ignorant may feel themselves inclined to laugh upon a subject that affects himself with the utmost seriousness, with much good manners and management bespeaks their patience,

* Dr. Franklin.

suggesting many good consequences that may result from a course of experiments upon this machine, and amongst others, that it may be of use in ascertaining the shape of continents and islands, and the face of wide-extended and far distant countries, an end not to be hoped for, unless by these means of extraordinary elevation, the human prospect may be immensely enlarged, and the philosopher, exalted to the skies, attain a view of the whole hemisphere at once. But whether he is to ascend by the mere inflation of his person, as hinted above, or whether in a sort of band-box, supported upon balloons, is not yet apparent, nor (I suppose) even in his own idea perfectly decided.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Oct. 6, 1783.

My dear Friend,—It is indeed a melancholy consideration, that the gospel, whose direct tendency is to promote the happiness of mankind, in the present as well as in the life to come, and which so effectually answers the design of its author, whenever it is well understood and sincerely believed, should, through the ignorance, the bigotry, the superstition of its professors, and the ambition of popes, and princes, the tools of popes, have produced incidentally so much mischief; only furnishing the world with a plausible excuse to worry each other, while they sanctified the worst cause with the specious pretext of zeal for the furtherance of the best.

Angels descend from heaven to publish peace between man and his Maker—the Prince of Peace himself comes to confirm and establish it, and war, hatred, and desolation, are the consequence. Thousands quarrel about the interpretation of a book which none of them understand. He that is slain dies firmly persuaded that the crown of martyrdom expects him, and he that slew him is equally convinced that he has done God service.* In reality, they are both mistaken, and equally unentitled to the honor they arrogate to themselves. If a multitude of blind men should set out for a certain city, and dispute about the right road till a battle ensued between them, the probable effect would be, that none of them would ever reach it; and such a fray, preposterous and shocking in the extreme, would exhibit a picture in some degree resembling the original of which we have been speaking. And why is not the world thus occupied at present? even because they have exchanged a zeal that was no better than madness for an indifference equally pitiable and absurd. The Holy Sepulchre has lost its importance in the eyes of nations called Christian, not because the light of true wisdom has delivered them from a superstitious attachment to the spot, but because he that was buried in it is no longer regarded by them as the Savior of the world. The exercise of reason, enlightened by philosophy, has cured them indeed of the misery of an abused understanding; but, together with the delusion, they have lost the substance, and, for the sake of the lies that were grafted upon it, have quarrelled with the truth itself. Here then we see the *ne plus ultra* of human wisdom, at least in affairs of religion. It enlightens the mind with respect to non-essentials, but, with respect to that in which the essence of Christianity consists, leaves it perfectly in the dark. It can discover many errors that in different ages have disgraced the faith, but it is only to make way for the admission of one more fatal than them all, which represents that faith itself as a delusion. Why those evils have been permitted shall be known hereafter. One thing in the mean time is certain; that the folly and frenzy of the professed disciples of the gospel have been more dangerous to its interests than all the avowed hostilities of its adversaries, and perhaps for this cause these mischiefs might be suffered to prevail for a season, that its divine original and nature might be the more illustrated, when it should appear that it was able to stand its ground for ages against that most formidable of all attacks, the indiscretion of its friends. The outrages that have followed this perversion of the truth have proved indeed a stumbling-block to individuals; the wise of this world, with all their wisdom, have not been able to distinguish between the blessing and abuse of it. Voltaire was offended, and Gibbon has turned his back; but the flock of Christ is still nourished and still increases, notwithstanding the unbelief of a philosopher is able to convert bread into a stone and a fish into a serpent.

I am much obliged to you for the Voyages, which I received* and began to read last night. My imagination is so captivated upon these occasions, that I seem to partake with the navigators in all the dangers they encountered.† I lose my anchor; my main-sail is

* The bitter dissensions of professing Christians have always afforded ground for the ridicule and scoff of the infidel. Voltaire parodied those well-known words, "See how these Christians love one another," in the following sarcastic manner.—"See how these Christians *hate* one another." It is related of Charles the Fifth, that, after his voluntary abdication of the throne, he amused himself by the occupation of making watches; and, finding that he never could, by any contrivance, make two watches to agree together, he exclaimed against his own folly, in having spent so large a portion of his life in endeavoring to make men agree on the subject of religion.

* Hawkesworth's.

† "He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home."
Task, book iv.

rent into shreds; I kill a shark, and by signs converse with a Patagonian, and all this without moving from the fireside. The principal fruits of these circuits that have been made round the globe seem likely to be the amusement of those that stayed at home. Discoveries have been made, but such discoveries as will hardly satisfy the expense of such undertakings. We brought away an Indian, and, having debauched him, we sent him home again to communicate the infection to his country—fine sport to be sure, but such as will not defray the cost. Nations that live upon bread-fruit, and have no mines to make them worthy of our acquaintance, will be but little visited for the future. So much the better for them; their poverty is indeed their mercy.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Oct. 10, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I have nothing to say on political subjects, for two reasons; first, because I know none that at present would prove very amusing, especially to you, who love your country; and, secondly, because there are none that I have the vanity to think myself qualified to discuss. I must beg leave, however, to rejoice a little at the failure of the Caisse d'Escomptes, because I think the French have well deserved it; and to mourn equally that the Royal George cannot be weighed; the rather, because I wrote two poems, one Latin and one English, to encourage the attempt.† The former of these only having been published, which the sailors would understand but little of, may be the reason, perhaps, why they have not succeeded. Believe me, my friend,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

† An elegant monument, erected above the grave of thirty-nine sailors, whose bodies were subsequently found, was erected in the churchyard of Portsea, to commemorate the melancholy loss of the Royal George. We subjoin the interesting epitaph, which is inscribed on black marble, in gold letters.

"READER,
WITH SOLEMN THOUGHT
SURVEY THIS GRAVE,
AND REFLECT
ON THE UNTIMELY DEATH
OF THY FELLOW MORTALS;
AND WHILST
AS A MAN, A BRITON, AND A PATRIOT,
THOU READEST
THE MELANCHOLY NARRATIVE,
DROP A TEAR
FOR THY COUNTRY'S
LOSS."

At the bottom of the monument, in a compartment by itself, are the following lines, in allusion to the brave Admiral Kempenfelt:

"'Tis not this stone, regretted chief, thy name,
Thy worth and merit shall extend to fame:
Brilliant achievements have thy name impreat,
In lasting characters, on Albion's breast."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Oct. 13, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I am much obliged to you for your American anecdotes, and feel the obligation perhaps more sensibly, the labor of transcribing being in particular that to which I myself have the greatest aversion. The loyalists are much to be pitied: driven from all the comforts that depend upon, and are intimately connected with, a residence in their native land, and sent to cultivate a distant one, without the means of doing it, abandoned too through a deplorable necessity, by the government to which they sacrificed all,* they exhibit a spectacle of distress, which one cannot view, even at this distance, without participating in what they feel. Why could not some of our useless wastes and forests have been allotted to their support? To have built them houses indeed, and furnished them with implements of husbandry, would have put us to no small expense; but I suppose the increase of population and the improvement of the soil, would soon have been felt as a national advantage, and have indemnified the state if not enriched it. We are bountiful to foreigners, and neglect those of our own household. I remember that, compassionating the miseries of the Portuguese, at the time of the Lisbon earthquake,† we sent them a ship-load of tools to clear away the rubbish with, and to assist them in rebuilding the city. I remember too it was reported at the time that the court of Portugal accepted our wheelbarrows and spades with a very ill grace, and treated our bounty with contempt. An act like this in behalf of our brethren, carried only a little farther, might possibly have redeemed them from ruin, have resulted in emolument to ourselves, have been received with joy and repaid with gratitude. Such are my speculations upon the subject, who, not being a politician by profession, and very seldom giving my attention for a moment to such a matter, may not be aware of difficulties and objections, which they of the cabinet can discern with half an eye. Perhaps to have taken under our protection a race of men proscribed by the Congress, might be thought dangerous to the interests we hope to have hereafter in their high and mighty regards and affections. It is ever the way of those who rule the earth, to leave out of their reckoning Him who rules the universe. They forget that the poor have a friend more powerful to avenge than they can be to oppress, and that treachery and perfidy must therefore prove bad policy in the end. The Americans themselves appear to

* In the terms of peace concluded with America, the loyalists, who adhered in their allegiance to Great Britain, were not sufficiently remembered, considering the sacrifices they had made, and thus had the misfortune of being persecuted by America, and neglected by England.

† This event occurred in the year 1756.

me to be in a situation little less pitiable than that of the deserted loyalists. Their fears of arbitrary imposition were certainly well founded. A struggle therefore might be necessary, in order to prevent it, and this end might surely have been answered without a renunciation of dependence. But the passions of a whole people, once put in motion, are not soon quieted. Contests beget aversion, a little success inspires more ambitious hopes, and thus a slight quarrel terminates at last in a breach never to be healed, and perhaps in the ruin of both parties. It does not seem likely that a country so distinguished by the Creator with everything that can make it desirable should be given up to desolation forever; and they possibly have reason on their side, who suppose that in time it will have the pre-eminence over all others; but the day of such prosperity seems far distant —Omnipotence indeed can hasten it, and it may dawn when it is least expected. But we govern ourselves in all our reasonings by present appearances. Persons at least no better informed than myself are constrained to do so.

I intended to have taken another subject when I began, and I wish I had. No man living is less qualified to settle nations than I am; but when I write to you, I talk, that is I write as fast as my pen can run, and on this occasion it ran away with me. I acknowledge myself in your debt for your last favor, but cannot pay you now, unless you will accept as payment, what I know you value more than all I can say beside, the most unfeigned assurances of my affection for you and yours.

Yours, &c., W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Oct. 20, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I have made a point of saying no fine things to Mr. Bacon,† upon an occasion that would well have justified them; deterred by a *caveat* he entered in his letter. Nothing can be more handsome than the present, nor more obliging than the manner in which he has made it. I take it for granted that the plate is, line for line, and stroke for stroke, an exact representation of his performance, as nearly, at least, as light and shade can exhibit, upon a flat surface, the effect of a piece of statuary. I may be allowed therefore to say that I admire it. My situation affords me no opportunity to cultivate the science of connoisseurship; neither would there be much propriety in my speaking the language of one to you, who disclaim the character. But we both know when we are pleased. It occurs to me, however, that I ought to say what it is that pleases me, for a general commendation, where there are so many particular beauties, would be insipid and unjust.

I think the figure of Lord Chatham singularly graceful, and his countenance full of the character that belongs to him. It speaks not only great ability and consummate skill, but a tender and heartfelt interest in the welfare of the charge committed to him. In the figure of the City, there is all that *empressement*, (pardon a French term, it expresses my idea better than any English one that occurs,) that the importance of her errand calls for: and it is noble in its air, though in a posture of supplication. But the figure of Commerce is indeed a perfect beauty. It is a literal truth, that I felt the tears flush into my eyes while I looked at her. The idea of so much elegance and grace having found so powerful a protection, was irresistible. There is a complacency and serenity in the air and countenance of Britannia, more suited to her dignity than that exultation and triumph which a less judicious hand might have dressed her in. She seems happy to sit at the feet of her deliverer. I have most of the monuments in the Abbey by heart, but I recollect none that ever gave me so much pleasure. The faces are all expressive, and the figures are all graceful. If you think the opinion of so unlearned a spectator worth communicating, and that I have not said more than Mr. Bacon's modesty can bear without offence, you are welcome to make him privy to my sentiments. I know not why he should be hurt by just praise; his fine talent is a gift, and all the merit of it is His property who gave it.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Sincerely and affectionately yours,
W. C.

I am out of your debt.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Oct. 20, 1783.

I should not have been thus long silent, had I known with certainty where a letter of mine might find you. Your summer excursions however are now at an end, and, addressing a line to you in the centre of the busy scene, in which you spend your winter, I am pretty sure of my mark.

I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather, and the pleasant scenes of summer; but the long evenings have their comforts too, and there is hardly to be found upon earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman by his fire-side in the winter. I mean, however, an Englishman that lives in the country, for in London it is not very easy to avoid intrusion. I have two ladies to read to, some-

* Private correspondence.

† The celebrated statuary who executed the noble monument to the memory of Lord Chatham, in Westminster Abbey.

times more, but never less—at present we are circumnavigating the globe, and I find the old story with which I amused myself some years since, through the great felicity of a memory not very retentive, almost new. I am however sadly at a loss for Cook's Voyage—can you send it? I shall be glad of Foster's too. These together will make the winter pass merrily, and you will much oblige me. W. C.

The last letter contains a slight sketch of those happy winter evenings, which the poet has painted so exquisitely in verse.* The two ladies whom he mentions as his constant auditors, were Mrs. Unwin and Lady Austen. The public, already indebted to the friendly and cheerful spirit of the latter, for the pleasant ballad of John Gilpin, had soon to thank her inspiring benevolence for a work of superior dignity, the masterpiece of Cowper's rich and fertile imagination.

This lady happened, as an admirer of Milton, to be partial to blank verse, and often solicited her poetical friend to try his powers in that species of composition. After repeated solicitation, he promised her, if she would furnish the subject, to comply with her request. "Oh!" she replied, "you can never be in want of a subject:—you can write upon any: write upon this sofa!" The poet obeyed her command, and from the lively repartee of familiar conversation arose a poem of many thousand verses, unexampled perhaps both in its origin and excellence—a poem of such infinite variety, that it seems to include every subject and every style without any violation of harmony and order; which delineates nature, under her most attractive forms, and breathes a spirit of the purest and most exalted morality.

A great part of the "Task" appears to have been composed in the winter—a circumstance the more remarkable, as the wintry months were generally unfavorable to the health of the poet. In the commencement of the poem, he marks both the season and the year, in the tender address to his companion.

> "Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
> Fast lock'd in mine."

Any circumstances which tend to illustrate the origin and progress of this poem deserve to be recorded with minute attention. We select a series of passages from Cowper's Letters to Mr. Bull, as affording this interesting information.

August 3. 1783.—"Your sea-side situation, your beautiful prospects, your fine rides, and the sight of the palaces which you have seen, we have not envied you; but we are glad that you have enjoyed them. Why should we envy any man. Is not our greenhouse a cabinet of perfumes? It is at this moment fronted with carnations and balsams, with mignonette and roses, with jessamine and woodbine, and wants nothing but your pipe to make it truly Arabian:—a wilderness of sweets! The 'Sofa' is ended, but not finished; a paradox, which your natural acumen, sharpened by habits of logical attention, will enable you to reconcile in a moment. Do not imagine however that I lounge over it—on the contrary I find it severe exercise to mould and fashion it to my mind!"

February 22, 1784.—"I congratulate you on the thaw: I suppose it is an universal blessing, and probably felt all over Europe. I myself am the better for it who wanted nothing that might make the frost supportable: what reason, therefore, have they to rejoice, who, being in want of all things, were exposed to its utmost rigor? The ice in my ink however is not yet dissolved. It was long before the frost seized it, but it at last prevailed. The 'Sofa' has consequently received little or no addition since. It consists at present of four books and part of a fifth: when the sixth is finished, the work is accomplished; but, if I may judge by my present inability, that period is at a considerable distance."

The following extract, not only mentions the completion of his great work, but gives a particular account of his next production.

November 8, 1784.—"'The Task,' as you know, is gone to the press; since it went I have been employed in writing another poem, which I am now transcribing, and which in a short time I design shall follow. It is entitled 'Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools;' the business and purpose of it are to censure the want of discipline, and the scandalous inattention to morals, that obtain in them, especially in the largest; and to recommend private tuition as a mode of education preferable on all accounts; to call upon fathers to become tutors to their own sons, where that is practicable; to take home a domestic tutor, where it is not; and, if neither can be done, to place them under the care of such a man as he to whom I am writing; some rural parson, whose attention is limited to a few."

The reader will find the poet himself relating, in more than one letter of the next year, some particulars of the time in which his great work, "The Task," was composed. Writing to Mr. Newton, on the 20th of October, 1784, Cowper says of his "Task," then in the press, "I began it about this time twelvemonth." These words of hasty and imperfect recollection might give rise to a persuasion, that this extensive and admirable production was completed in a year. But, as it is proved by the first extract from the poet's letters to Mr. Bull, that the first book

* See Task, book iv.

(entitled the "Sofa") was ended on the 3rd of August, 1783, we may reasonably conclude that this interesting poem was begun in June or July. It was not imparted, as it advanced, to any of the poet's confidential friends, except to the two ladies with whom he lived at the time of its commencement, and to his kind and sympathizing neighbor, Mr. Bull, who had shown his benevolent zeal in encouraging the spirit of Cowper to cheer and amuse itself in poetical studies. The final verses of "The Task" were probably written in September, 1784, as Cowper sent a transcript of the poem for the press to his favorite young friend, Mr. Unwin, early in October. His modest reserve appears very remarkable in his not having communicated this composition even to Mr. Unwin, till it was absolutely finished, and his tender delicacy of regard and attention to that young friend was amiably displayed in assigning to him the honorable office of revising and consigning to the press a work so important.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Nov. 3, 1783.

My dear Friend,—My time is short, and my opportunity not the most favorable. My letter will consequently be short likewise, and perhaps not very intelligible. I find it no very easy matter to bring my mind into that degree of composure, which is necessary to the arrangement either of words or matter. You will naturally expect to receive some account of this confusion that I describe, some reason given for it. On Saturday night, at eleven o'clock, when I had not been in bed five minutes, I was alarmed by a cry of fire, announced by two or three shrill screams upon our staircase. Our servants, who were going to bed, saw it from their windows; and, in appearance, so near, that they thought our house in danger. I immediately rose, and putting by the curtain, saw sheets of fire rising above the ridge of Mr. Palmer's house, opposite to ours. The deception was such that I had no doubt it had begun with *him*, but soon found that it was rather farther off. In fact, it was at three places. Having broke out in three different parts, it is supposed to have been maliciously kindled. A tar-barrel and a quantity of tallow made a most tremendous blaze; and the buildings it had seized upon being all thatched, the appearance became every moment more formidable. Providentially the night was perfectly calm, so calm that candles, without lanterns, of which there were multitudes in the street, burnt as steadily as in the house. By four in the morning it was so far reduced that all danger seemed to be over; but the confusion it had occasioned was almost infinite. Every man who supposed his dwelling-house in jeopardy, emptied it as fast as he could, and conveyed his moveables to the house of some neighbor, supposed to be more secure. Ours, in the space of two hours, was so filled with all sorts of lumber, that we had not even room for a chair by the fire-side. George —— is the principal sufferer. He gave eighteen guineas, or nearly that sum, to a woman, whom, in his hurry, he mistook for his wife; but the supposed wife walked off with the money, and he will probably never recover it. He has likewise lost forty pounds' worth of wool. London never exhibited a scene of greater depredation, drunkenness and riot. Everything was stolen that could be got at, and every drop of liquor drunk that was not guarded. Only one thief has yet been detected; a woman of the name of J——, who was stopped by young Handscomb with an apron full of plunder. He was forced to strike her down, before he could wrest it from her. Could you visit the place, you would see a most striking proof of a Providence interposing to stop the progress of the flames. They had almost reached, that is to say, within six yards of Daniel Raban's wood-pile, in which were fifty pounds' worth of faggots and furze; and exactly there they were extinguished; otherwise, especially if a breath of air had happened to move, all that side of the town must probably have been consumed. After all this dreadful conflagration, we find nothing burnt but the out-houses; and the dwellings to which they belonged have suffered only the damage of being unroofed on that side next the fire. No lives were lost, nor any limbs broken. Mrs. Unwin, whose spirits served her while the hubbub lasted, and the day after, begins to feel the effect of it now. But I hope she will be relieved from it soon, being better this evening than I expected. As for me, I am impregnable to all such assaults. I have nothing, however, but this subject in my mind, and it is in vain that I invite any other into it. Having, therefore, exhausted this, I finish, assuring you of our united love, and hoping to find myself in a frame of mind more suited to my employment when I write next.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 10, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I have lost and wasted almost all my writing time, in making an alteration in the verses I either enclose or subjoin, for I know not which will be the case at present. If prose comes readily, I shall transcribe them on another sheet, otherwise on this. You will understand before you

have read many of them, that they are not for the press. I lay you under no other injunctions. The unkind behavior of our acquaintance, thought it is possible that in some instances it may not much affect our happiness, nor engage many of our thoughts, will sometimes obtrude itself upon us with a degree of importunity not easily resisted, and then, perhaps, though almost insensible of it before, we feel more than the occasion will justify. In such a moment it was that I conceived this poem, and gave loose to a degree of resentment which, perhaps, I ought not to have indulged, but which in a cooler hour I cannot altogether condemn. My former intimacy with the two characters was such, that I could not but feel myself provoked by the neglect with which they both treated me on a late occasion.* So much by way of preface.

You ought not to have supposed that, if you had visited us last summer, the pleasure of the interview would have been all your own. By such an imagination you wrong both yourself and us. Do you suppose we do not love you? You cannot suspect your mother of coldness, and as to me, assure yourself I have no friend in the world with whom I communicate without the least reserve, yourself excepted. Take heart then, and when you find a favorable opportunity to come, assure yourself of such a welcome from us both as you have a right to look for. But I have observed in your two last letters somewhat of a dejection and melancholy, that I am afraid you do not sufficiently strive against. I suspect you of being too sedentary. "You cannot walk." Why you cannot is best known to yourself. I am sure your legs are long enough, and your person does not overload them. But I beseech you ride, and ride often. I think I have heard you say you cannot even do that without an object. Is not health an object? Is not a new prospect, which in most countries is gained at the end of every mile, an object? Assure yourself that easy chairs are no friends to cheerfulness, and that a long winter spent by the fireside is a prelude to an unhealthy spring. Everything I see in the fields is to me an object; and I can look at the same rivulet, or at a handsome tree, every day of my life with new pleasure. This indeed is partly the effect of a natural taste for rural beauty, and partly the effect of habit, for I never in all my life have let slip the opportunity of breathing fresh air, and conversing with nature, when I could fairly catch it. I earnestly recommend a cultivation of the same taste to you, suspecting that you have neglected it, and suffer for doing so.

Last Saturday se'nnight, the moment I had composed myself in my bed, your mother too having just got into hers, we were alarmed by a cry of fire, on the staircase. I immediately rose, and saw sheets of flame above the roof of Mr. Palmer's house, our opposite neighbor. The mischief, however, was not so near to him as it seemed to be, having begun at a butcher's yard, at a little distance. We made all haste down stairs, and soon threw open the street door, for the reception of as much lumber, of all sorts, as our house would hold, brought into it by several who thought it necessary to move their furniture. In two hours' time we had so much that we could hold no more, even the uninhabited part of our building being filled. Not that we ourselves were entirely secure—an adjoining thatch, on which fell showers of sparks, being rather a dangerous neighbor. Providentially, however, the night was perfectly calm, and we escaped. By four in the morning it was extinguished, having consumed many out-buildings, but no dwelling-house. Your mother suffered a little in her health, from the fatigue and bustle of the night, but soon recovered; as for me, it hurt me not. The slightest wind would have carried the fire to the very extremity of the town, there being multitudes of thatched buildings, and faggot-piles so near to each other, that they must have proved infallible conductors.

The balloons prosper; I congratulate you upon it. Thanks to Montgolfier, we shall fly at last.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

* Lord Thurlow and Colman, to whom he presented his first volume, and received no acknowledgment.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Nov. 17, 1783.

My dear Friend,—The country around us is much alarmed with apprehensions of fire. two have happened since that of Olney. One at Hitchin, where the damage is said to amount to eleven thousand pounds, and another at a place not far from Hitchin, of which I have not learned the name. Letters have been dropped at Bedford, threatening to burn the town; and the inhabitants have been so intimidated as to have placed a guard in many parts of it, several nights past. Since our conflagration here, we have sent two women and a boy to the justice for depredation: S—— R——, for stealing a piece of beef, which, in her excuse she said she intended to take care of. This lady, whom you well remember, escaped for want of evidence; not that evidence was indeed wanting, but our men of Gotham judged it unnecessary to send it. With her went the woman whom I mentioned before, who, it seems, has made some sort of profession, but

* Private correspondence.

upon this occasion allowed herself a latitude of conduct rather inconsistent with it, having filled her apron with wearing apparel, which she likewise intended to take care of. She would have gone to the county gaol, had William Raban, the baker's son, who prosecuted, insisted upon it; but he good-naturedly, though, I think, weakly, interposed in her favor, and begged her off. The young gentleman who accompanied these fair ones is the junior son of Molly Boswell. He had stolen some iron-work, the property of Griggs, the butcher. Being convicted, he was ordered to be whipped, which operation he underwent at the cart's tail, from the stone-house to the high arch and back again. He seemed to show great fortitude, but it was all an imposition upon the public. The beadle, who performed it, had filled his left hand with red ochre, through which after every stroke he drew the lash of his whip, leaving the appearance of a wound upon the skin, but in reality not hurting him at all. This being perceived by Mr. Constable H——, who followed the beadle, he applied his cane, without any such management or precaution, to the shoulders of the too merciful executioner. The scene immediately became more interesting. The beadle could by no means be prevailed upon to strike hard, which provoked the constable to strike harder; and this double flogging continued, till a lass of Silver-end, pitying the pitiful beadle thus suffering under the hands of the pitiless constable, joined the procession, and placing herself immediately behind the latter seized him by his capillary club, and pulling him backwards by the same, slapped his face with a most Amazonian fury. This concatenation of events has taken up more of my paper than I intended it should, but I could not forbear to inform you how the beadle thrashed the thief, the constable the beadle, and the lady the constable, and how the thief was the only person concerned who suffered nothing. Mr. Teedon has been here, and is gone again. He came to thank me for some left-off clothes. In answer to our inquiries after his health, he replied that he had a slow fever, which made him take all possible care not to inflame his blood. I admitted his prudence, but in his particular instance could not very clearly discern the need of it. Pump water will not heat him much; and, to speak a little in his own style, more inebriating fluids are to him, I fancy, not very attainable. He brought us news, the truth of which, however, I do not vouch for, that the town of Bedford was actually on fire yesterday, and the flames not extinguished when the bearer of the tidings left it.*

* A considerable fire occurred at this time in the town of Bedford, and thirty-nine houses were consumed, but it is said from accidental causes.

Swift observes, when he is giving his reasons why the preacher is elevated always above his hearers, that, let the crowd be as great as it will below, there is always room enough overhead. If the French philosophers can carry their art of flying to the perfection they desire, the observation may be reversed, the crowd will be overhead, and they will have most room who stay below. I can assure you, however, upon my own experience, that this way of travelling is very delightful. I dreamt a night or two since, that I drove myself through the upper regions in a balloon and pair, with the greatest ease and security. Having finished the tour I intended, I made a short turn, and with one flourish of my whip descended; my horses prancing and curvetting with an infinite share of spirit, and without the least danger either to me or my vehicle. The time, we may suppose, is at hand, and seems to be prognosticated by my dream, when these airy excursions will be universal, when judges will fly the circuit and bishops their visitations; and when the tour of Europe will be performed with much greater speed, and with equal advantage, by all who travel merely for the sake of having it to say, that they have made it.*

I beg you will accept for yourself and yours our unfeigned love, and remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon, when you see him.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

Olney, Nov. 23, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Your opinion of voyages and travels would spoil an appetite less keen than mine; but being pretty much, perhaps more than any man who can be said to enjoy his liberty, confined to a spot, and being very desirous of knowing all that can be known of this same planet of ours while I have the honor to belong to it—and having, besides, no other means of information at my command—I am constrained to be satisfied with narratives, not always, indeed, to be implicitly depended upon, but which, being subjected to the exercise of a little consideration, cannot materially deceive us. Swinburn's is a book I had fixed upon, and determined if possible to procure, being pleased with some extracts from it which I found in the Review. I need hardly add, that I shall be much obliged to Mrs. Hill for a sight of it. I account myself truly and much indebted to that lady for the trouble she is so kind as to take upon my account, and shall esteem my-

* The discovery of balloons had attracted the attention of the public at this period, and various speculations were indulged as to the probable result.

† Private correspondence.

self her debtor for all the amusement I meet with in the southern hemisphere, should I be so fortunate as to get there. My reading is pretty much circumscribed both by want of books and the influence of particular reasons. Polities are my abhorrence, being almost always hypothetical, fluctuating, and impracticable. Philosophy—I should have said natural philosophy, mathematically studied, does not suit me; and such exhibitions of that subject as are calculated for less learned readers, I have read in former days and remember in the present. Poetry, English poetry, I never touch, being pretty much addicted to the writing of it, and knowing that much intercourse with those gentlemen betrays us unavoidably into a habit of imitation, which I hate and despise most cordially.

If *he* be the happiest man who has least money in the funds, there are few upon earth whom I have any occasion to envy. I would consent, however, to have my pounds multiplied into thousands, even at the hazard of all I might feel from that tormenting passion. I send nothing to the papers myself, but Unwin sometimes sends for me. His receptacle of my squibs is the Public Advertiser; but they are very few, and my present occupations are of a kind that will still have a tendency to make them fewer.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

The neglect which Cowper had experienced from a high quarter seems deeply to have wounded his sensitive spirit, and to have dictated some of the remarks to be found in the following letter.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 24, 1783.

My dear Friend,—An evening unexpectedly retired, and which your mother and I spend without company (an occurrence far from frequent), affords me a favorable opportunity to write by to-morrow's post, which else I could not have found. You are very good to consider my literary necessities with so much attention, and I feel proportionably grateful. Blair's Lectures (though I suppose they must make a part of my private studies, not being *ad captum fœminarum*) will be perfectly welcome. You say you felt my verses: I assure you that in this you followed my example, for I felt them first. A man's lordship is nothing to me, any farther than in connexion with qualities that entitle him to my respect. If he thinks himself privileged by it to treat me with neglect, I am his humble servant, and shall never be at a loss to render him an equivalent. I will not however belie my knowledge of mankind so much as to seem surprised at a treatment which I had abundant reason to expect. To these men, with whom I was once intimate, and for many years, I am no longer necessary, no longer convenient, or in any respect an object. They think of me as of the man in the moon, and, whether I have a lantern, or a dog and faggot, or whether I have neither of these desirable accommodations, is to them a matter of perfect indifference: upon that point we are agreed; our indifference is mutual; and, were I to publish again, which is not possible, I should give them a proof of it.

L'Estrange's Josephus has lately furnished us with evening lectures. But the historian is so tediously circumstantial, and the translator so insupportably coarse and vulgar, that we are all three weary of him. How would Tacitus have shone upon such a subject, great master as he was of the art of description, concise without obscurity, and affecting without being poetical. But so it was ordered, and for wise reasons no doubt, that the greatest calamities any people ever suffered, and an accomplishment of one of the most signal prophecies in the scripture, should be recorded by one of the worst writers. The man was a temporizer too, and courted the favor of his Roman masters at the expense of his own creed, or else an infidel and absolutely disbelieved it. You will think me very difficult to please; I quarrel with Josephus for the want of elegance, and with some of our modern historians for having too much—with him for running right forward like a gazette, without stopping to make a single observation by the way, and with them for pretending to delineate characters that existed two thousand years ago, and to discover the motives by which they were influenced, with the same precision as if they had been their contemporaries. Simplicity is become a very rare quality in a writer. In the decline of great kingdoms, and where refinement in all the arts is carried to an excess, I suppose it is always rare. The latter Roman writers are remarkable for false ornament, they were yet no doubt admired by the readers of their own day; and with respect to authors of the present era, the most popular among them appear to me equally censurable on the same account. Swift and Addison were simple.

Your mother wants room for a postscript, so my lecture must conclude abruptly.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Nov. 30, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I have neither long visits to pay nor to receive, nor ladies to spend hours in telling me that which might be told

* Private correspondence.

in five minutes, yet often find myself obliged to be an economist of time, and to make the most of a short opportunity. Let our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them, in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us under that imposing character, will find us out, even in the stillest retreat, and plead its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how, by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and, by the time I have made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the antediluvian world, that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration, and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How then could seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly, and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast; I swallow a bucket of goats' milk, and a dozen good sizeable cakes. I fasten a new string to my bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stripped off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chase, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough, I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the meantime the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I mend an old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus, what with tilling the ground, and eating the fruit of it, hunting, and walking, and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find, at the end of many centuries, that they had all slipped through his fingers, and were passed away like a shadow. What wonder then that I, who live in a day of so much greater refinement, when there is so much more to be wanted, and wished, and to be enjoyed, should feel myself now and then pinched in point of opportunity, and at some loss for leisure to fill four sides of a sheet like this? Thus, however, it is, and, if the ancient gentlemen to whom I have referred, and their complaints of the disproportion of time to the occasions they had for it, will not serve me as an excuse, I must even plead guilty, and confess that I am often in haste, when I have no good reason for being so.

This by way of introduction; now for my letter. Mr. Scott is desired by Mr. De Coetlogon to contribute to the "Theological Review," of which I suppose that gentleman is a manager. He says he has ensured your assistance, and at the same time desires mine, either in prose or verse. He did well to apply to you, because you can afford him substantial help; but as for me, had he known me better, he would never have suspected me for a theologian, either in rhyme or otherwise.

Lord Dartmouth's Mr. Wright spent near two hours with me this morning; a respectable old man, whom I always see with pleasure, both for his master's sake and for his own. I was glad to learn from him that his lordship has better health than he has enjoyed for some years.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Your affectionate W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 15, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I know not how it fares with you, at a time when philosophy has just brought forth her most extraordinary production, not excepting, perhaps, that prodigy, a ship, in all respects complete, and equal to the task of circumnavigating the globe. My mind, however, is frequently getting into these balloons, and is busy in multiplying speculations as airy as the regions through which they pass. The last account from France, which seems so well authenticated, has changed my jocularity upon this occasion into serious expectation. The invention of these new vehicles is yet in its infancy, yet already they seem to have attained a degree of perfection which navigation did not reach, till ages of experience had matured it, and science had exhausted both her industry and her skill in its improvement. I am aware, indeed, that the first boat or canoe that was ever formed, though rude in its construction—perhaps not constructed at all, being only a hollow tree that had fallen casually into the water, and which, though furnished with neither sails nor oars, might yet be guided by a pole—was a more perfect creature in its

* Private correspondence.

kind than a balloon at present; the single circumstance of its manageable nature giving it a clear superiority both in respect of safety and convenience. But the atmosphere, though a much thinner medium, we well know, resists the impression made upon it by the tail of a bird, as effectually as the water that of a ship's rudder. Pope, when inculcating one of his few useful lessons, and directing mankind to the providence of God, as the true source of all their wisdom, says beautifully—

Learn of the little Nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

It is easy to parody these lines, so as to give them an accommodation and suitableness to the present purpose.

Learn of the circle-making kite to fly,
Spread the fan-tail, and wheel about the sky.

It is certain at least that nothing within the reach of human ingenuity will be left unattempted to accomplish and add all that is wanting to this last effort of philosophical contrivance.* The approximating powers of the telescope, and the powers by which the thunder-storm is delivered of its contents peaceably and without mischief, were once perhaps in appearance more remote from discovery, and seemed less practicable, than we may now suppose it to give direction to that which is already buoyant; especially possessed as we are of such consummate mechanical skill, already masters of principles which we have nothing to do but to apply, of which we have already availed ourselves in the similar case of navigation, and having in every fowl of the air a pattern, which now at length it may be sufficient to imitate. Wings and a tail indeed were of little use, while the body, so much heavier than the space of air it occupied, was sure to sink by its own weight, and could never be held in equipoise by any implements of the kind which human strength could manage. But now we float; at random indeed, pretty much, and as the wind drives us; for want of nothing, however, but that steerage which invention, the conqueror of many equal, if not superior, difficulties may be expected to supply. Should the point be carried, and man at last become as familiar with the air as he has long been with the ocean, will it in its consequences prove a mercy or a judgment? I think, a judgment. First, because, if a power to convey himself from place to place, like a bird, would have been good for him, his Maker would have formed him with such a capacity. But he has been a groveller upon the earth for six thousand years, and now at last, when the close of this present state of things approaches, begins to exalt himself above it. So much the worse for *him*. Like a truant school-boy, he breaks his bounds, and will have reason to repent of his presumption. Secondly, I think it will prove a judgment, because with the exercise of a very little foresight, it is easy to prognosticate a thousand evils, which the project must necessarily bring after it; amounting at last to the confusion of all order, the annihilation of all authority, with dangers both to property and person, and impunity to the offenders. Were I an absolute legislator, I would therefore make it death for a man to be convicted of flying, the moment he could be caught; and to bring him down from his altitude by a bullet sent through his head or his carriage should be no murder. Philsophers would call me a Vandal; the scholar would say that, had it not been for me, the fable of Dædalus would have been realized; and historians would load my memory with reproaches of phlegm, and stupidity, and oppression; but in the meantime the world would go on quietly, and, if it enjoyed less liberty, would at least be more secure.

I know not what are your sentiments upon the subject of the East India bill.* This, too, has frequently afforded me matter of speculation. I can easily see that it is not without its blemishes; but its beauties, in my eye, are much predominant. Whatever may be its author's views, if he delivers so large a portion of mankind from such horrible tyranny as the East has so long suffered, he deserves a statue much more than Montgolfier,† who, it seems, is to re-

* What would Cowper have thought, if he had lived to see the modern invention of railroads, and the possibility of travelling thirty miles in one hour and twenty minutes, by means of the operation of steam?

* As repeated allusion is made to the affairs of the East India Company, by Cowper, in the following letters, for the information of those who may not be conversant with this subject, we add the following information.

The great abuses that were imputed to the system of government established in that country, where a company of merchants exercised the supreme sway, led Mr. Fox, in 1783, (the period in which he was a member of administration,) to introduce his celebrated East India Bill, in which he proposed to annihilate the charter of the Company, and to dispossess them of their power. The measure passed in the Commons, but was thrown out by the Lords; and royal influence was said to have been exerted to procure its rejection. The failure of this bill led to the dissolution of that administration, in the December of the same year. In the succeeding January of 1784, Mr. Pitt introduced his no less celebrated bill. Instead of going the length of violating the charter, granted in the time of William III., (the great defect attributed to Mr. Fox's preceding bill,) *his* object was to preserve it inviolate, but with certain modifications. The main feature in his plan was to separate the commercial from the territorial concerns of the Company, and to vest the latter in a board, nominated by government; thus withdrawing from the East India Company the exercise of powers belonging only to the supreme authority. This bill, though more just and popular than the preceding, was nevertheless rejected by a majority of eight; but it was subsequently renewed, and carried, and is the origin of that Board of Control which is now so well known, as superintending and regulating the concerns of our Indian empire.

† The inventor of balloons.

ceive that honor. Perhaps he may bring his own freedom into jeopardy; but to do this for the sake of emancipating nations so much more numerous than ourselves is at least generous, and a design that should have my encouragement, if I had any encouragement to afford it.

We are well, and love you. Remember us, as I doubt not you do, with the same affection, and be content with my sentiments upon subjects such as these, till I can send you, if that day should ever come, a letter more worthy of your reception.

Nous sommes les vôtres,

GUILLAUME ET MARIE.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 27, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Thanks to the patriotic junto whose efforts have staved off the expected dissolution, franks have not yet lost their currency. Ignorant as they were that my writing by this post depended upon the existence of the present parliament, they have conducted their deliberations with a sturdiness and magnanimity that would almost tempt one to suppose that they had known it. So true it is that the actions of men are connected with consequences they are little aware of; and that events, comparatively trivial in themselves, may give birth to the most important.

My thoughts of ministers and men in power are nearly akin to yours. It is well for the public, when the rulers of a state are actuated by principles that may happen to coincide with its interests. The ambition of an individual has often been made subservient to the general good; and many a man has served his country merely for the sake of immortalizing himself by doing it. So far, it seems to me, the natural man is to be trusted, and no farther. Self it is at the bottom of all his conduct. If self can be pleased, flattered, enriched, exalted by his exertions, and his talents are such as qualify him for great usefulness, his country shall be the better for him. And this, perhaps, is all the patriotism we have a right to look for. In the meantime, however, I cannot but think such a man in some degree a respectable character, and am willing at least to do him honor so far as I feel myself benefited by him. Ambition and the love of fame are certainly no Christian principles, but they are such as commonly belong to men of superior minds, and the fruits they produce may often plead their apology. The great men of the world are of a piece with the world to which they belong; they are raised up to govern it, and in the government of it are prompted by worldly motives: but it prospers perhaps under their management; and, when it does, the Christian world, which is totally a distinct creation, partaking of the advantage, has cause to be thankful. The sun is a glorious creature; he does much good, but without intending it. I, however, who am conscious of the good he does, though I know not what religion he is of, or whether he has any or none, rejoice in his effects, admire him, and am sensible that it is every man's duty to be thankful for him. In this sentiment I know you agree with me, for I believe he has not a warmer votary than yourself.

We say the king can do no wrong; and it is well for poor George the Third that he cannot. In my opinion, however, he has lately been within a hair's-breadth of that predicament.* His advisers, indeed, are guilty, and not he: but he will probably find, however hard it may seem, that if he can do no wrong, he may yet suffer the consequences of the wrong he cannot do. He has dismissed his servants, but not disgraced them; they triumph in their degradation, and no man is willing to supply their places. Must their offices remain unoccupied, or must they be courted to resume them? Never was such a distracted state of things within my remembrance; and I much fear that this is but the beginning of sorrows. It is not a time of day for a king to take liberties with the people: there is a spirit in the Commons that will not endure it: and his Majesty's advisers must be less acquainted with the temper of the times than it is possible to suppose them, if they imagine that such strides of prerogative will not be resented. The address will gall him. I am sorry that he has exposed himself to such a reprehension, but I think it warranted by the occasion. I pity him; but, king as he is, and much as I have always honored him, had I been a member, I should have voted for it.

I am obliged to Mr. Bacon for thinking of me. That expression, however, does not do justice to my feelings. Even with the little knowledge I have of him, I should love him, had I no reason to suppose myself at any time an object of his attention; but, knowing that I am so happy as to have a share in his remembrance, I certainly love him the more. Truly, I am not in his debt: I cannot say wherefore it is so, but certainly few days pass in which I do not remember *him*. The print, indeed, with which he favored me, and which is always in my view, must often suggest the recollection of him; but though I greatly value it, I do not believe it is my only prompter.

* Private correspondence.

* This alludes to the influence supposed to have been exercised by the king against the passing of Mr. Fox's celebrated East India Bill; and to his having commissioned Lord Temple, afterwards Lord Buckingham, to make known his sentiments on that subject. This event led to the dissolution of the famous coalition ministry.

I finish with what I wish may make you laugh, as it did me. Mr. Scott, exhorting the people to frequent prayer, closed his address thus:—"You have nothing to do but to ask and you will ever find him ready to bestow. Open your wide mouths, and he will fill them."

Mrs. Unwin is well. Accept an old but a true conclusion—our united love to you and yours, and believe me, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

No date.

My dear Friend,—It is hard upon us striplings, who have uncles still living (N. B. I myself have an uncle still alive) that those venerable gentlemen should stand in our way, even when the ladies are in question; that I, for instance, should find in one page of your letter a hope that Miss Shuttleworth would be of your party, and be told in the next that she is engaged to your uncle. Well, we may perhaps never be uncles, but we may reasonably hope that the time is coming, when others, as young as we are now, shall envy us the privilege of old age, and see us engross that share in the attention of the ladies, to which their youth must aspire in vain. Make our compliments, if you please, to your sister Eliza, and tell her that we are both mortified at having missed the pleasure of seeing her.

Balloons are so much the mode, that even in this country we have attempted a balloon. You may possibly remember that at a place called Weston, a little more than a mile from Olney, there lives a family whose name is Throckmorton. The present possessor is a young man, whom I remember a boy. He has a wife, who is young, genteel, and handsome. They are Papists, but much more amiable than many Protestants. We never had any intercourse with the family, though ever since we lived here, we have enjoyed the range of their pleasure grounds, having been favored with a key, which admits us into all. When this man succeeded to the estate, on the death of his elder brother, and came to settle at Weston, I sent him a complimentary card, requesting the continuance of that privilege, having till then enjoyed it by favor of his mother, who on that occasion went to finish her days at Bath. You may conclude that he granted it, and for about two years nothing more passed between us. A fortnight ago, I received an invitation, in the civilest terms, in which he told me that the next day he should attempt to fill a balloon, and if it would be any pleasure to me to be present, should be happy to see me. Your mother and I went. The whole country were there, but the balloon could not be filled. The endeavor was, I believe, very philosophically made, but such a process depends, for its success, upon such niceties as make it very precarious. Our reception was, however, flattering to a great degree, insomuch that more notice seemed to be taken of us than we could possibly have expected, indeed rather more than of any of his other guests. They even seemed anxious to recommend themselves to our regards. We drank chocolate, and were asked to dine, but were engaged. A day or two afterwards Mrs. Unwin and I walked that way, and were overtaken in a shower. I found a tree that I thought would shelter us both, a large elm, in a grove that fronts the mansion. Mrs. T. observed us, and, running towards us in the rain, insisted on our walking in. He was gone out. We sat chatting with her till the weather cleared up, and then at her instance took a walk with her in the garden. The garden is almost their only walk, and is certainly their only retreat in which they are not liable to interruption. She offered us a key of it, in a manner that made it impossible not to accept it, and said she would send us one. A few days afterwards, in the cool of the evening, we walked that way again. We saw them going towards the house, and exchanged bows and courtesies at a distance, but did not join them. In a few minutes, when we had passed the house, and had almost reached the gate that opens out of the park into the adjoining field, I heard the iron gate belonging to the court-yard ring, and saw Mr. T. advancing hastily towards us. We made equal haste to meet him; he presented to us the key, which I told him I esteemed a singular favor; and, after a few such speeches as are made on such occasions, we parted. This happened about a week ago. I concluded nothing less than that all this civility and attention was designed, on their part, as a prelude to a nearer acquaintance; but here at present the matter rests. I should like exceedingly to be on an easy footing there, to give a morning call now and then, and to receive one, but nothing more. For, though he is one of the most agreeable men I ever saw, I could not wish to visit him in any other way; neither our house, furniture, servants, nor income, being such as qualify us to make entertainments; neither would I on any account be introduced to the neighboring gentry. Mr. T. is altogether a man of fashion, and respectable on every account.*

I have told you a long story. Farewell. We number the days as they pass, and are glad that we shall see you and your sister soon.

Yours, &c., W. C.

The year 1781 was a memorable period in

* He afterwards succeeded to the title of Sir John Throckmorton.

the life of the poet, not only as it witnessed the completion of one extensive performance, and the commencement of another (his translation of Homer,) but as it terminated his intercourse with that highly pleasing and valuable friend, whose unremitting attention and seasonable advice had induced him to engage in both.

Delightful and advantageous as his friendship with Lady Austen had proved, he now began to feel that it grew impossible to preserve that triple cord which his own pure heart had led him to suppose not speedily to be broken. Mrs. Unwin, though by no means destitute of mental accomplishments, was eclipsed by the brilliancy of the poet's new friend, and naturally became apprehensive of losing that influence which she had so long experienced over a man of genius and virtue, and that honorable share in his affections which she had previously enjoyed without the fear of witnessing its diminution.

Cowper perceived the painful necessity of sacrificing a great portion of his present gratifications. He felt that he must relinquish that long-established friendship which had formed the delight and happiness of his past life, or the new associate, whom he cherished as a sister, and whose heart and mind were so peculiarly congenial with his own. His gratitude for past services of unexampled magnitude and weight would not allow him to hesitate; with a resolution and delicacy that do the highest honor to his feelings, he wrote a farewell letter to Lady Austen, explaining and lamenting the circumstances that forced him to renounce the society of a friend, whose enchanting talents and kindness had proved so agreeably instrumental to the revival of his spirits and to the exercise of his fancy.

As Hayley's further account of this event is minute and particular, we shall present it to the reader in his own words.

"In those very interesting conversations with which I was honored by Lady Austen, I was irresistibly led to express an anxious desire for the sight of a letter written by Cowper in a situation that must have called forth all the finest powers of his eloquence as a monitor and a friend. The lady confirmed me in my opinion that a more admirable letter could not be written; and, had it existed at that time, I am persuaded from her noble frankness and zeal for the honor of the departed poet, she would have given me a copy; but she ingenuously confessed that in a moment of natural mortification she burnt this very tender yet resolute letter. I mention the circumstance, because a literary correspondent whom I have great reason to esteem, has recently expressed to me a wish (which may perhaps be general) that I could introduce into this compilation the letter in question. Had it been confided to my care, I am persuaded I should have thought it very proper for publication, as it displayed both the tenderness and the magnanimity of Cowper; nor could I have deemed it a want of delicacy towards the memory of Lady Austen, to exhibit a proof that, animated by the warmest admiration of the great poet, whose fancy she could so successfully call forth, she was willing to devote her life and fortune to his service and protection. The sentiment is to be regarded as honorable to the lady; it is still more honorable to the poet, that with such feelings as rendered him perfectly sensible of all Lady Austen's fascinating powers, he could return her tenderness with innocent regard, and yet resolutely preclude himself from her society when he could no longer enjoy it without compromising what he owed to the compassionate and generous guardian of his sequestered life. No person can justly blame Mrs. Unwin for feeling apprehensive that Cowper's intimacy with a lady of such extraordinary talents might lead him into perplexities of which he was by no means aware. This remark was suggested by a few elegant and tender verses, addressed by the poet to Lady Austen, and shown to me by that lady.

"Those who were acquainted with the unsuspecting innocence and sportive gayety of Cowper would readily allow, if they had seen the verses to which I allude, that they are such as he might have addressed to a real sister; but a lady only called by that endearing name may be easily pardoned if she was induced by them to hope that they might possibly be a prelude to a still dearer alliance. To me they appeared expressive of that peculiarity in his character, a gay and tender gallantry, perfectly distinct from the attachment of love. If the lady who was the subject of the verses, had given them to me with a permission to print them, I should have thought the poet himself might have approved of their appearance, accompanied with such a commentary.

"In the whole course of this work I have endeavored to recollect, on every doubtful occasion, the feelings of Cowper, and made it a rule to reject whatever my perfect intimacy with those feelings could lead me to suppose the spirit of the departed poet might wish me to lay aside as unfit for publication. I consider an editor as guilty of the basest injury to the dead who admits into the posthumous volumes of an author, whom he professes to love and admire, any composition which his own conscience informs him *that author*, if he could speak from the tomb, would direct him to suppress. On this principle I have declined to print some letters which entered, more than I think the public ought to enter, into the history of a trifling feminine discord that disturbed the perfect harmony of the happy

trio at Olney, when Lady Austen and Mrs. Unwin were the united inspirers of the poet. Yet as the brief and true account which I gave of their separation has been thought to cast a shade of censure on the temper of Mrs. Unwin, which I was far from intending, in justice to the memory of that exemplary and sublime female friend, I here introduce a passage from a letter of Cowper to the Rev. William Unwin, honorable to both the ladies in question, as it describes them in a moment of generous reconciliation.

"'I enclose a letter from Lady Austen, which I beg you to return me in your next.—We are reconciled. She seized the first opportunity to embrace your mother with tears of the tenderest affection, and I of course am satisfied. We were all a little awkward at first, but now are as easy as ever.'

"This letter happens to have no date, but the expressions I have cited from it are sufficient to prove that Mrs. Unwin, instead of having shown an envious infirmity of temper on this occasion, must have conducted herself with a delicate liberality of mind."

We now enter upon the correspondence of the year.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan. 3, 1784.

My dear William,—Your silence began to be distressing to both your mother and me, and had I not received a letter from you last night, I should have written by this post to inquire after your health. How can it be that you, who are not stationary like me, but often change your situation, and mix with a variety of company, should suppose me furnished with such abundant materials and yourself destitute? I assure you faithfully that I do not find the soil of Olney prolific in the growth of such articles as make letter-writing a desirable employment. No place contributes less to the catalogue of incidents, or is more scantily supplied with anecdotes worth notice.

We have

One parson, one poet, one bellman, one cryer,
And the poor poet is our only 'squire.

Guess then if I have not more reason to expect two letters from you than you one from me. The principal occurrence, and that which affects me most at present, came to pass this moment. The stair-foot door being swelled by the thaw would do anything better than it would open. An attempt to force it upon that office has been attended with such a horrible dissolution of its parts that we were immediately obliged to introduce a chirurgeon, commonly called a carpenter, whose applications we have some hope will cure it of a locked jaw, and heal its numerous fractures. His medicines are powerful chalybeates and a certain glutinous salve, which he tells me is made of the tails and ears of animals. The consequences however are rather unfavorable to my present employment, which does not well brook noise, bustle, and interruption.

This being the case, I shall not perhaps be either so perspicuous or so diffuse on the subject of which you desire my sentiments as I should be, but I will do my best. Know then that I have learned long since, of Abbé Raynal, to hate all monopolies as injurious, howsoever managed, to the interests of commerce at large; consequently the charter in question would not at any rate be a favorite of mine. This however is of itself I confess no sufficient reason to justify the resumption of it. But such reasons I think are not wanting. A grant of that kind, it is well known, is always forfeited by the non-performance of the conditions. And why not equally forfeited if those conditions are exceeded; if the design of it be perverted, and its operation extended to objects which were never in the contemplation of the donor? This appears to me to be no misrepresentation of their case, whose charter is supposed to be in danger. It constitutes them a trading company, and gives them an exclusive right to traffic in the East Indies. But it does no more. It invests them with no sovereignty: it does not convey to them the royal prerogative of making war and peace, which the king cannot alienate if he would. But this prerogative they have exercised, and, forgetting the terms of their institution, have possessed themselves of an immense territory, which they have ruled with a rod of iron, to which it is impossible they should even have a right, unless such a one as it is a disgrace to plead—the right of conquest. The potentates of this country they dash in pieces like a potter's vessel, as often as they please, making the happiness of thirty millions of mankind a consideration subordinate to that of their own emolument, oppressing them as often as it may serve a lucrative purpose, and in no instance, that I have ever heard, consulting their interest or advantage. That government therefore is bound to interfere and to unking these tyrants is to me self-evident. And if, having subjugated so much of this miserable world, it is therefore necessary that we must keep possession of it, it appears to me a duty so binding on the legislature to resume it from the hands of those usurpers, that I should think a curse, and a bitter one, must follow the neglect of it. But, suppose this were done, can they be legally deprived of their charter? In truth I think so. If the abuse and perversion of a charter can amount to a defeasance of it, never were they so grossly palpable as in this instance; never was char-

ter so justly forfeited. Neither am I at all afraid that such a measure should be drawn into precedent, unless it could be alleged, as a sufficient reason for not hanging a rogue, that perhaps magistracy might grow wanton in the exercise of such a power, and now and then hang up an honest man for its amusement. When the Governors of the Bank shall have deserved the same severity, I hope they will meet with it. In the meantime I do not think them a whit more in jeopardy because a corporation of plunderers have been brought to justice.

We are well and love you all. I never wrote in such a hurry, nor in such disturbance. Pardon the effects, and believe me yours affectionately, W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.*

Olney, Jan. 5, 1784.

Dear Madam,—You will readily pardon the trouble I give you by this line, when I plead my attention to your husband's convenience in my excuse. I know him to be so busy a man, that I cannot in conscience trouble him with a commission, which I know it is impossible he should have leisure to execute. After all, the labor would devolve upon you, and therefore I may as well address you in the first instance.

I have read and return the books you were so kind as to procure for me. Mr. Hill gave me hopes, in his last, that from the library, to which I have subscribed, I might still be supplied with more. I have not many more to wish for, nor do I mean to make any unreasonable use of your kindness. In about a fortnight I shall be favored, by a friend in Essex, with as many as will serve me during the rest of the winter. In summer I read but little. In the meantime, I shall be much obliged to you for Forster's Narrative of the same voyage, if your librarian has it; and likewise for "Swinburn's Travels" which Mr. Hill mentioned. If they can be sent at once, which perhaps the terms of subscription may not allow, I shall be glad to receive them so. If not, then Forster's first, and Swinburn afterwards: and Swinburn, at any rate, if Forster is not to be procured.

Reading over what I have written, I find it perfectly free and easy; so much indeed in that style, that had I not had repeated proofs of your good-nature in other instances, I should have modesty enough to suppress it, and attempt something more civil, and becoming a person who has never had the happiness of seeing you. But I have always observed that sensible people are best pleased with what is natural and unaffected. Nor can I tell you a plainer truth, than that I am, without the least dissimulation, and with a warm remembrance of past favors,

My dear Madam,
Your affectionate humble servant,
W. C.

I beg to be remembered to Mr. Hill.

* Private correspondence.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Jan. 8. 1784.

My dear Friend,—I wish you had more leisure, that you might oftener favor me with a page of politics. The authority of a newspaper is not of sufficient weight to determine my opinions, and I have no other documents to be set down by. I therefore on this subject am suspended in a state of constant scepticism, the most uneasy condition in which the judgment can find itself. But *your* politics have weight with me, because I know your independent spirit, the justness of your reasonings, and the opportunities you have of information. But I know likewise the urgency and the multiplicity of your concerns; and therefore, like a neglected clock, must be contented to go wrong, except when perhaps twice in the year you shall come to set me right.

Public credit is indeed shaken, and the funds at a low ebb. How can they be otherwise when our western wing is already clipped to the stumps, and the shears at this moment threaten our eastern. Low however as our public stock is, it is not lower than my private one; and this being the article that touches me most nearly at present, I shall be obliged to you if you will have recourse to such ways and means for the replenishment of my exchequer as your wisdom may suggest and your best ability suffice to execute. The experience I have had of your readiness upon all similar occasions has been very agreeable to me; and I doubt not but upon the present I shall find you equally prompt to serve me. So,

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Jan. 18, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I too have taken leave of the old year, and parted with it just when you did, but with very different sentiments and feelings upon the occasion. I looked back upon all the passages and occurrences of it as a traveller looks back upon a wilderness, through which he has passed with weariness and sorrow of heart, reaping no other fruit of his labor than the poor consolation that, dreary as the desert was, he has left it all be-

* Private correspondence.

hind him. The traveller would find even this comfort considerably lessened, if, as soon as he had passed one wilderness, another of equal length and equally desolate should expect him. In this particular, his experience and mine would exactly tally. I should rejoice indeed that the old year is over and gone, if I had not every reason to prophesy a new one similar to it.

I am glad you have found so much hidden treasure; and Mrs. Unwin desires me to tell you, that you did her no more than justice in believing that she would rejoice in it. It is not easy to surmise the reason why the Reverend Doctor, your predecessor, concealed it. Being a subject of a free government, and I suppose full of the divinity most in fashion, he could not fear lest his great riches should expose him to persecution. Nor can I suppose that he held it any disgrace for a dignitary of the church to be wealthy, at a time when churchmen in general spare no pains to become so. But the wisdom of some men has a droll sort of knavishness in it, much like that of the magpie, who hides what he finds with a deal of contrivance, merely for the pleasure of doing it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan., 1784.

My dear William,—When I first resolved to write an answer to your last this evening, I had no thought of anything more sublime than prose. But before I began it occured to me that perhaps you would not be displeased with an attempt to give a poetical translation of the lines you sent me. They are so beautiful, that I felt the temptation irresistible. At least, as the French say, it was *plus forte que moi;* and I accordingly complied. By this means I have lost an hour; and whether I shall be able to fill my sheet before supper is as yet doubtful. But I will do my best.

For your remarks, I think them perfectly just. You have no reason to distrust your taste, or to submit the trial of it to me. You understand the use and the force of language as well as any man. You have quick feelings and you are fond of poetry. How is it possible then that you should not be a judge of it? I venture to hazard only one alteration, which, as it appears to me, would amount to a little improvement. The seventh and eighth lines I think I should like better thus—

Aspirante levi zephyro et redeunte serenâ
Anni temperie fœcundo è cespite surgunt.

My reason is, that the word *cum* is repeated too soon. At least my ear does not like it, and when it can be done without injury to the sense, there seems to be an elegance in diversifying the expression, as much as possible, upon similar occasions. It discovers a command of phrase, and gives a more masterly air to the piece. If *extincta* stood unconnected with *telis*, I should prefer your word *micant*, to the doctor's *vigent*. But the latter seems to stand more in direct opposition to that sort of extinction which is effected by a shaft or arrow. In the daytime the stars may be said to die, and in the night to recover their strength. Perhaps the doctor had in his eye that noble line of Gray's,

Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war!

But it is a beautiful composition. It is tender, touching and elegant. It is not easy to do it justice in English, as for example.*

Many thanks for the books, which being most admirably packed came safe. They will furnish us with many a winter evening's amusement. We are glad that you intend to be the carrier back.

We rejoice too that your cousin has remembered you in her will. The money she left to those who attended her hearse, would have been better bestowed upon you: and by this time perhaps she thinks so. Alas! what an inquiry does that thought suggest, and how impossible to make it to any purpose! What are the employments of the departed spirit? and where does it subsist? Has it any cognizance of earthly things? Is it transported to an immeasurable distance; or is it still, though imperceptible to us, conversant with the same scene, and interested in what passes here? How little we know of a state to which we are all destined; and how does the obscurity that hangs over that undiscovered country increase the anxiety we sometimes feel as we are journeying towards it! It is sufficient however for such as you and a few more of my aquaintance to know that in your separate state you will be happy. Provision is made for your reception; and you will have no cause to regret aught that you have left behind.

I have written to Mr. ——. My letter went this morning. How I love and honor that man! For many reasons I dare not tell him how much. But I hate the frigidity of the style in which I am forced to address him. That line of Horace,

Dii tibi divitias dederunt artemque fruendi.

was never so applicable to the poet's friend, as to Mr. ——. My bosom burns to immortalize him. But prudence says, "Forbear!" and, though a poet, I pay respect to her injunctions.†

* The verses appearing again with the original in the next letter, are omitted.

† John Thornton, Esq., is the person here alluded to.

I sincerely give you joy of the good you have unconsciously done by your example and conversation. That you seem to yourself not to deserve the acknowledgment your friend makes of it, is a proof that you do. Grace is blind to its own beauty, whereas such virtues as men may reach without it are remarkable self-admirers. May you make such impressions upon many of your order! I know none that need them more.

You do not want my praises of your conduct towards Mr. ——. It is well for him however, and still better for yourself, that you are capable of such a part. It was said of some good man (my memory does not serve me with his name) "do him an ill turn and you make him your friend forever." But it is Christianity only that forms such friends. I wish his father may be duly affected by this instance and proof of your superiority to those ideas of you which he has so unreasonably harbored. He is not in my favor now, nor will be upon any other terms.

I laughed at the comments you make on your own feelings, when the subject of them was a newspaper eulogium. But it was a laugh of pleasure, and approbation: such indeed is the heart, and so is it made up. There are few that can do good, and keep their own secret, none perhaps without a struggle. Yourself and your friend —— are no very common instances of the fortitude that is necessary in such a conflict. In former days I have felt my heart beat and every vein throb upon such an occasion. To publish my own deed was wrong. I knew it to be so. But to conceal it seemed like a voluntary injury to myself. Sometimes I could and sometimes I could not succeed. My occasions for such conflicts indeed were not very numerous.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Jan. 25, 1784.

My dear Friend,—This contention about East Indian patronage seems not unlikely to avenge upon us by its consequences the mischiefs we have done there. The matter in dispute is too precious to be relinquished by either party; and each is jealous of the influence the other would derive from the possession of it. In a country whose politics have so long rolled upon the wheels of corruption, an affair of such value must prove a weight in either scale, absolutely destructive of the very idea of a balance. Every man has his sentiments upon this subject, and I have mine. Were I constituted umpire of this strife, with full powers to decide it, I would tie a talent of lead about the neck of this patronage, and plunge it into the depths of the sea. To speak less figuratively, I would abandon all territorial interest in a country to which we can have no right, and which we cannot govern with any security to the happiness of the inhabitants, or without the danger of incurring either perpetual broils, or the most insupportable tyranny at home. That sort of tyranny I mean, which flatters and tantalizes the subject with a show of freedom, and in reality allows him nothing more, bribing to the right and left, rich enough to afford the purchase of a thousand consciences, and consequently strong enough, if it happen to meet with an incorruptible one, to render all the efforts of that man, or of twenty such men, if they could be found, romantic and of no effect. I am the king's most loyal subject, and most obedient humble servant. But, by his majesty's leave, I must acknowledge I am not altogether convinced of the rectitude even of his own measures, or of the simplicity of his views; and, if I were satisfied that he himself is to be trusted, it is nevertheless palpable that he cannot answer for his successors. At the same time he is my king, and I reverence him as such. I account his prerogative sacred, and shall never wish prosperity to a party that invades it, and under that pretence of patriotism, would annihilate all the consequence of a character essential to the very being of the constitution. For these reasons I am sorry that we have any dominion in the East; that we have any such emoluments to contend about. Their immense value will probably prolong the dispute, and such struggles having been already made in the conduct of it as have shaken our very foundations, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that still greater efforts and more fatal are behind; and, after all, the decision in favor of either side may be ruinous to the whole. In the meantime, that the Company themselves are but indifferently qualified for the kingship is most deplorably evident. What shall I say therefore? I distrust the court, I suspect the patriots; I put the Company entirely aside, as having forfeited all claim to confidence in such a businsss, and see no remedy of course, but in the annihilation, if that could be accomplished, of the very existence of our authority in the East Indies.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

It was natural for Cowper to indulge in such a reflection, if we consider, that in his time India presented a melancholy scene of rapine and corruption. It used to be said by Mr. Burke, that every man became unbaptized in going to India, and that, should it please Providence, by some unforeseen dispensation, to deprive Great Britain of her Indian empire, she would leave behind no memorial but the

evidences of her ambition, and the traces of her desolating wars.

Happily we have lived to see a great moral revolution, and England has at length redeemed her character. She has ennobled the triumphs of her arms, by making them subservient to the introduction of the Gospel; and seems evidently destined by Providence to be the honored instrument of evangelizing the nations of the East. Already the sacred Scriptures have been translated, in whole or in part, into nearly forty of the Oriental languages or dialects. Schools have been established, and are rapidly multiplying in the three presidencies. The apparently insurmountable barrier of caste is giving way, and the great fabric of Indian superstition is crumbling into dust, while on its ruins will arise the everlasting empire of righteousness and truth.

The following lines, written by Dr. Jortin, to which we subjoin Cowper's translation, were inclosed in the last letter.

IN BREVITATEM VITÆ SPATII, HOMINIBUS CONCESSI.

Hei mihi! Lege ratâ sol occidit atque resurgit,
Lunaque mutatæ reparat dispendia formæ,
Astraque, purpurei telis extincta diei,
Rursus nocte vigent. Humiles telluris alumni,
Graminis herba virens, et florum picta propago,
Quos crudelis hyems lethali tabe peredit,
Cum zephyri vox blanda vocat, redüitque serени
Temperies anni, fœcundo è cespite surgunt.
Nos domini rerum nos, magna et pulchra minati,
Cum breve ver vitæ robustaque transiit ætas,
Deficimus; nec nos ordo revolubilis auras
Reddit in ætherias, tumuli neque claustra resolvit.

ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

Suns that set, and moons that wane,
Rise, and are restored again.
Stars, that orient day subdues,
Night at her return renews.
Herbs and flowers, the beauteous birth
Of the genial womb of earth,
Suffer but a transient death
From the winter's cruel breath.
Zephyr speaks; serener skies
Warm the glebe, and they arise.
We, alas! earth's haughty kings,
We, that promise mighty things,
Losing soon life's happy prime,
Droop and fade, in little time.
Spring returns, but not our bloom,
Still 'tis winter in the tomb.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Feb., 1784.

My dear Friend,—I am glad that you have finished a work, of which I well remember the beginning, and which I was sorry you thought it expedient to discontinue.* Your reason for not proceeding was, however, such as I was obliged to acquiesce in, being suggested by a jealousy you felt, "lest your spirit should be betrayed into acrimony, in writing upon such a subject." I doubt not you have sufficiently guarded that point; and indeed, at the time I could not discover that you had failed in it. I have busied myself this morning in contriving a Greek title, and in seeking a motto. The motto you mention is certainly apposite. But I think it an objection that it has been so much in use; almost every writer that has claimed a liberty to think for himself, upon whatever subject, having chosen it. I therefore send you one which I never saw in that shape yet, and which appears to me equally apt and proper. The Greek word δεσμός, which signifies literally a shackle, may figuratively serve to express those chains which bigotry and prejudice cast upon the mind. It seems therefore, to speak like a lawyer, no misnomer of your book to call it—

Μισοδεσμος.

The following pleases me most of all the mottos I have thought of. But with respect both to that and the title you will use your pleasure.

Querelis
Haud justis assurgis, et irrita jurgia jactas.
ÆN. x. 91.

From the little I have seen, and the much I have heard, of the manager of the Review you mention, I cannot feel even the smallest push of a desire to serve him in the capacity of a poet. Indeed I dislike him so much, that, had I a drawer full of pieces fit for his purpose, I hardly think I should contribute to his collection. It is possible too that I may live to be once more a publisher myself; in which case, I should be glad to find myself in possession of any such original pieces as might decently make their appearance in a volume of my own. At present, however, I have nothing that would be of use to him, nor have I many opportunities of composing, Sunday being the only day in the week which we spend alone.

I am at this moment pinched for time, but was desirous of proving to you with what alacrity my Greek and Latin memory are always ready to obey you, and therefore, by the first post, have to the best of my ability complied with your request.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours, W. C.

* The "Review of Ecclesiastical History."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Feb. 10, 1784.

My dear Friend,—The morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my corre-

spondents. Sleep, that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect. As the evening approaches, I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time. So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose. The watch is irregularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still. In many respects we have the advantage of our forefathers, the Picts. We sleep in a whole skin, are not obliged to submit to the painful operation of puncturing ourselves from head to foot in order that we may be decently dressed, and fit to appear abroad. But, on the other hand, we have reason enough to envy them their tone of nerves, and that flow of spirits which effectually secured them from all uncomfortable impressions of a gloomy atmosphere, and from every shade of melancholy from every other cause. They understood, I suppose, the use of vulnerary herbs, having frequent occasion for some skill in surgery, but physicians I presume they had none, having no need of any. Is it possible that a creature like myself can be descended from such progenitors, in whom there appears not a single trace of family resemblance? What an alteration have a few ages made! They, without clothing, would defy the severest season, and I, with all the accommodations that art has since invented, am hardly secure even in the mildest. If the wind blows upon me when my pores are open, I catch cold. A cough is the consequence. I suppose, if such a disorder could have seized a Piet, his friends would have concluded that a bone had stuck in his throat, and that he was in some danger of choking. They would perhaps have addressed themselves to the cure of his cough by thrusting their fingers into his gullet, which would only have exasperated the case. But they would never have thought of administering laudanum, my only remedy. For this difference however that has obtained between me and my ancestors, I am indebted to the luxurious practices and enfeebling self-indulgence of a long line of grandsires, who from generation to generation have been employed in deteriorating the breed, till at last the collected effects of all their follies have centred in my puny self—a man, indeed, but not in the image of those that went before me—a man who sighs and groans, who wears out life in dejection and oppression of spirits, and who never thinks of the aborigines of the country to which I belong, without wishing that I had been born among them. The evil is without a remedy, unless the ages that are passed could be recalled, my whole pedigree be permitted to live again, and being properly admonished to beware of enervating sloth and refinement, would preserve their hardiness of nature uninpaired, and transmit the desirable quality to their posterity. I once saw Adam in a dream. We sometimes say of a picture that we doubt not its likeness to the original, though we never saw him; a judgment we have some reason to form, when the face is strongly charactered, and the features full of expression. So I think of my visionary Adam, and for a similar reason. His figure was awkward indeed in the extreme. It was evident that he had never been taught by a Frenchman to hold his head erect, or to turn out his toes; to dispose of his arms, or to simper without a meaning. But, if Mr. Bacon was called upon to produce a statue of Hercules, he need not wish for a juster pattern. He stood like a rock; the size of his limbs, the prominence of his muscles, and the height of his stature, all conspired to bespeak him a creature whose strength had suffered no diminution, and who, being the first of his race, did not come into the world under a necessity of sustaining a load of infirmities, derived to him from the intemperance of others. He was as much stouter than a Piet, as I suppose a Piet to be than I. Upon my hypothesis, therefore, there has been a gradual declension in point of bodily vigor, from Adam down to me; at least, if my dream were a just representation of that gentleman, and deserve the credit I cannot help giving it, such must have been the case.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Feb., 1784.

My dear Friend,—I give you joy of a thaw that has put an end to a frost of nine weeks' continuance with very little interruption; the longest that has happened since the year 1739. May I presume that you feel yourself indebted to me for intelligence, which perhaps no other of your correspondents will vouchsafe to communicate, though they are as well apprised of it, and as much convinced of the truth of it, as myself? It is I suppose everywhere felt as a blessing, but nowhere more sensibly than at Olney; though even at Olney the severity of it has been alleviated in behalf of many. The same benefactor, who befriended them last year, has with equal liberality administered a supply to their necessities in the present. Like the subterraneous flue that warms my myrtles, he does good and is unseen. His injunctions of secrecy are still as rigorous as ever, and must therefore be observed with the same attention. He however is a happy man, whose philanthropy is not like mine, an

impotent principle, spending itself in fruitless wishes. At the same time I confess it is a consolation, and I feel it an honor, to be employed as the conductor, and to be trusted as the dispenser, of another man's bounty. Some have been saved from perishing, and all that could partake of it from the most pitiable distress.

I will not apologize for my politics, or suspect them of error, merely because they are taken up from the newspapers. I take it for granted that those reporters of the wisdom of our representatives are tolerably correct and faithful. Were they not, and were they guilty of frequent and gross misrepresentation, assuredly they would be chastised by the rod of parliamentary criticism. Could I be present at the debates, I should indeed have a better opinion of my documents. But if the House of Commons be the best school of British politics, which I think an undeniable assertion, then he that reads what passes there has opportunities of information inferior only to theirs who hear for themselves, and can be present upon the spot. Thus qualified, I take courage; and when a certain reverend neighbor of ours curls his nose at me, and holds my opinions cheap, merely because he has passed through London, I am not altogether convinced that he has reason on his side. I do not know that the air of the metropolis has a power to brighten the intellects, or that to sleep a night in the great city is a necessary cause of wisdom. He tells me that Mr. Fox is a rascal, and that Lord North is a villain; that every creature execrates them both, and that I ought to do so too. But I beg to be excused. Villain and rascal are appellations which we, who do not converse with great men, are rather sparing in the use of. I can conceive them both to be most entirely persuaded of the rectitude of their conduct, and the rather because I feel myself much inclined to believe that, being so, they are not mistaken. I cannot think that secret influence is a bugbear, a phantom conjured up to serve a purpose, the mere *shibboleth* of a party:* and being, and having always been, somewhat of an enthusiast on the subject of British liberty, I am not able to withhold my reverence and good wishes from the man, whoever he be, that exerts himself in a constitutional way to oppose it.

Caraccioli upon the subject of self-acquaintance was never I believe translated. I have sometimes thought that the Theological Miscellany might be glad of a chapter of it monthly. It is a work which I much admire. You, who are master of their plan, can tell me whether such a contribution would be welcome. If you think it would, I would be punctual in my remittances; and a labor of that sort would suit me better in my present state of mind than original composition on religious subjects.

Remember us as those that love you, and are never unmindful of you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

* The secret influence, here mentioned, was at this time, and often afterwards, said to be employed by the Court; and being highly unconstitutional, was frequently adverted to, in strong language of reprehension, in the House of Commons. Mr. Powys, afterwards Lord Lilford, called it "*a fourth estate in the realm*;" and Mr. Burke denominated it "*a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself*."

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.*

Olney, Feb. 22, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I owe you thanks for your kind remembrance of me in your letter sent me on occasion of your departure, and as many for that which I received last night. I should have answered, had I known where a line or two from me might find you; but, uncertain whether you were at home or abroad, my diligence I confess wanted the necessary spur.

It makes a capital figure among the comforts we enjoyed during the long severity of the season, that the same *incognito* to all except ourselves made us his almoners this year likewise, as he did the last, and to the same amount. Some we have been enabled I suppose to save from perishing, and certainly many from the most pinching necessity. Are you not afraid, Tory as you are, to avow your principles to me, who am a Whig? Know that I am in the opposition; that, though I pity the king, I do not wish him success in the present contest.† But this is too long a battle to fight upon paper. Make haste, that we may decide it face to face.

Our respects wait upon Mrs. Bull, and our love upon the young Hebræan.‡ I wish you joy of his proficiency, and am glad that you can say, with the old man in Terence,

> Omnes continuò laudare fortunas meas,
> Qui natum habeam tali ingenio præditum.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Feb. 28, 1784.

My dear Friend,—We are glad that you have such a Lord Petre in your neighborhood. He must be a man of a liberal turn to employ a heretic in such a service. I wish you a further acquaintance with him, not doubting that the more he knows you, he will find you the more agreeable. You despair

* Private correspondence.

† This alludes to Mr. Pitt being retained in office, though frequently outvoted in Parliament.

‡ Mr. Bull's son, who afterwards succeeded his father, both in the ministerial office, and also in the seminary established at Newport Pagnel, and with no less claim to respect and esteem.

of becoming a prebendary, for want of certain rhythmical talents, which you suppose me possessed of. But what think you of a cardinal's hat? Perhaps his lordship may have interest at Rome, and that greater honor may await you. Seriously, however, I respect his character, and should not be sorry if there were many such Papists in the land.

Mr. —— has given free scope to his generosity, and contributed as largely to the relief of Olney as he did last year. Soon after I had given you notice of his first remittance, we received a second to the same amount, accompanied indeed with an intimation that we were to consider it as an anticipated supply, which, but for the uncommon severity of the present winter, he should have reserved for the next. The inference is that next winter we are to expect nothing. But the man, and his beneficent turn of mind considered, there is some reason to hope that, logical as the inference seems, it may yet be disappointed.

Adverting to your letter again, I perceive that you wish for my opinion of your answer to his lordship. Had I forgot to tell you that I approve of it, I know you well enough to be aware of the misinterpretation you would have put upon my silence. I am glad therefore that I happened to cast my eye upon your appeal to my opinion, before it was too late. A modest man, however able, has always some reason to distrust himself upon extraordinary occasions. Nothing is so apt to betray us into absurdity as too great a dread of it; and the application of more strength than enough is sometimes as fatal as too little: but you have escaped very well. For my own part, when I write to a stranger, I feel myself deprived of half my intellects. I suspect that I shall write nonsense, and I do so. I tremble at the thought of an inaccuracy, and become absolutely ungrammatical. I feel myself sweat. I have recourse to the knife and the pounce. I correct half a dozen blunders, which in a common case I should not have committed, and have no sooner despatched what I have written, than I recollect how much better I could have made it; how easily and genteelly I could have relaxed the stiffness of the phrase, and have cured the insufferable awkwardness of the whole, had they struck me a little earlier. Thus we stand in awe of we know not what, and miscarry through mere desire to excel.

I read Johnson's Prefaces every night, except when the newspaper calls me off. At a time like the present, what author can stand in competition with a newspaper; or who, that has a spark of patriotism, does not point all his attention to the present crisis.

W. C.

I am so disgusted with ———, for allowing himself to be silent, when so loudly called upon to write to you, that I do not choose to express my feelings. Woe to the man whom kindness cannot soften!

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 8, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for the two first numbers of the Theological Miscellany. I have not read them regularly through, but sufficiently to observe that they are much indebted to Omicron.* An essay, signed Parvulus, pleased me likewise; and I shall be glad if a neighbor of ours, to whom I have lent them, should be able to apply to his own use the lesson it inculcates. On farther consideration, I have seen reason to forego my purpose of translating Caraccioli. Though I think no book more calculated to teach the art of pious meditation, or to enforce a conviction of the vanity of all pursuits that have not the soul's interests for their object, I can yet see a flaw in his manner of instructing, that in a country so enlightened as ours would escape nobody's notice. Not enjoying the advantage of evangelical ordinances and Christian communion, he falls into a mistake, natural in his situation, ascribing always the pleasures he found in a holy life, to his own industrious perseverance in a contemplative course, and not to the immediate agency of the great Comforter of his people, and directing the eye of his readers to a spiritual principle within, which he supposes to subsist in the soul of every man, as the source of all divine enjoyment, and not to Christ, as he would gladly have done, had he fallen under Christian teachers. Allowing for these defects, he is a charming writer, and by those who know how to make such allowances may be read with great delight and improvement. But, with these defects in his manner, though, I believe, no man ever had a heart more devoted to God, he does not seem dressed with sufficient exactness to be fit for the public eye, where man is known to be nothing, and Jesus all in all. He must therefore be dismissed, as an unsuccessful candidate for a place in this Miscellany, and will be less mortified at being rejected in the first instance than if he had met with a refusal from the publisher. I can only therefore repeat what I said before, that, when I find a proper subject, and myself at liberty to pursue it, I will endeavor to contribute my quota.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 11, 1784.

I return you many thanks for your Apology, which I have read with great pleasure. You know of old that your style always

* The signature assumed by Mr. Newton.

pleases me; and having, in a former letter, given you the reasons for which I like it, I spare you now the pain of a repetition. The spirit too in which you write pleases me as much. But I perceive that in some cases it is possible to be severe, and at the same time perfectly good-tempered; in all cases, I suppose, where we suffer by an injurious and unreasonable attack, and can justify our conduct by a plain and simple narrative. On such occasions truth itself seems a satire, because by implication at least it convicts our adversaries of the want of charity and candor. For this reason perhaps you will find that you have made many angry, though you are not so; and it is possible they may be the more angry upon that very account. To assert and to prove that an enlightened minister of the gospel may, without any violation of his conscience, and even upon the ground of prudence and propriety, continue in the Establishment, and to do this with the most absolute composure, must be very provoking to the dignity of some dissenting doctors; and, to nettle them still more, you in a manner impose upon them the necessity of being silent, by declaring that you will be so yourself. Upon the whole, however, I have no doubt that your Apology will do good. If it should irritate some who have more zeal than knowledge, and more of bigotry than of either, it may serve to enlarge the views of others, and to convince them that there may be grace, truth, and efficacy in the ministry of a church of which they are not members. I wish it success, and all that attention to which, both from the nature of the subject and the manner in which you have treated it, it is so well entitled.

The patronage of the East Indies will be a dangerous weapon, in whatever hands. I have no prospect of deliverance for this country, but the same that I have of a possibility that we may one day be disencumbered of our ruinous possessions in the East.

Our good neighbors,* who have so successfully knocked away our western crutch from under us, seem to design us the same favor on the opposite side, in which case we shall be poor, but I think we shall stand a better chance to be free; and I had rather drink water gruel for breakfast, and be no man's slave, than wear a chain, and drink tea.

I have just room to add that we love you as usual, and are your very affectionate William and Mary. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, March 15, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I converse, you say, upon other subjects than that of despair, and may therefore write upon others. Indeed, my friend, I am a man of very little conversation upon any subject. From that of despair I abstain as much as possible, for the sake of my company: but I will venture to say that it is never out of my mind one minute in the whole day. I do not mean to say that I am never cheerful. I am often so; always indeed when my nights have been undisturbed for a season. But the effect of such continual listening to the language of a heart hopeless and deserted is that I can never give much more than half my attention to what is started by others, and very rarely start anything myself. My silence, however, and my absence of mind, make me sometimes as entertaining as if I had wit. They furnish an occasion for friendly and good-natured raillery; they raise a laugh, and I partake of it. But you will easily perceive that a mind thus occupied is but indifferently qualified for the consideration of theological matters. The most useful and the most delightful topics of that kind are to me forbidden fruit;—I tremble if I approach them. It has happened to me sometimes that I have found myself imperceptibly drawn in, and made a party in such discourse. The consequence has been, dissatisfaction and self-reproach. You will tell me, perhaps, that I have written upon these subjects in verse, and may therefore, if I please, in prose. But there is a difference. The search after poetical expression, the rhyme, and the numbers, are all affairs of some difficulty; they amuse, indeed, but are not to be attained without study, and engross, perhaps, a larger share of the attention than the subject itself. Persons fond of music will sometimes find pleasure in the tune, when the words afford them none. There are, however, subjects that do not always terrify me by their importance; such I mean as relate to Christian life and manners: and when such a one presents itself, and finds me in a frame of mind that does not absolutely forbid the employment, I shall most readily give it my attention, for the sake, however, of your request merely.—Verse is my favorite occupation, and what I compose in that way I reserve for my own use hereafter.

I have lately finished eight volumes of Johnson's Prefaces, or Lives of the Poets. In all that number I observe but one man—a poet of no great fame—of whom I did not know that he existed till I found him there, whose mind seems to have had the slightest tincture of religion; and he was hardly in his senses. His name was Collins. He sank into a state of melancholy, and died young. Not long before his death he was found at his lodgings in Islington, by his biographer, with the New Testament in his hand. He said to Johnson, "I have but one

* The French nation, who aided America in her struggle for independence.

† Private correspondence.

book, but it is the best." Of him, therefore, there are some hopes. But from the lives of all the rest there is but one inference to be drawn—that poets are a very worthless, wicked set of people.

Yours, my dear friend, truly,
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 19, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I wish it were in my power to give you any account of the Marquis Caraccioli. Some years since I saw a short history of him in the 'Review,' of which I recollect no particulars, except that he was (and for aught I know may be still) an officer in the Prussian service. I have two volumes of his works, lent me by Lady Austen. One is upon the subject of self-acquaintance, and the other treats of the art of conversing with the same gentleman. Had I pursued my purpose of translating him, my design was to have furnished myself, if possible, with some authentic account of him, which I suppose may be procured at any bookseller's who deals in foreign publications. But for the reasons given in my last I have laid aside the design. There is something in his style that touches me exceedingly, and which I do not know how to describe. I should call it pathetic, if it were occasional only, and never occurred but when his subject happened to be particularly affecting. But it is universal; he has not a sentence that is not marked with it. Perhaps therefore I may describe it better by saying that his whole work has an air of pious and tender melancholy, which to me at least is extremely agreeable. This property of it, which depends perhaps altogether upon the arrangement of his words, and the modulation of his sentences, it would be very difficult to preserve in a translation. I do not know that our language is capable of being so managed, and rather suspect that it is not, and that it is peculiar to the French, because it is not unfrequent among their writers, and I never saw anything similar to it in our own.

My evenings are devoted to books. I read aloud for the entertainment of the party, thus making amends by a vociferation of two hours for my silence at other times. We are in good health, and waiting as patiently as we can for the end of this second winter.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

The following letter will be read with interest as expressing Cowper's sentiments on Dr. Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."

TO THE REV. WM. UNWIN.*

Olney, March 21, 1784.

My dear William,—I thank you for the entertainment you have afforded me. I often wish for a library, often regret my folly in selling a good collection, but I have one in Essex. It is rather remote indeed, too distant for occasional reference; but it serves the purpose of amusement, and a wagon being a very suitable vehicle for an author, I find myself commodiously supplied. Last night I made an end of reading "Johnson's Prefaces;" but the number of poets whom he has vouchsafed to chronicle being fifty-six, there must be many with whose history I am not yet acquainted. These, or some of these, if it suits you to give them a part of your chaise when you come, will be heartily welcome. I am very much the biographer's humble admirer. His uncommon share of good sense, and his forcible expression, secure to him that tribute from all his readers. He has a penetrating insight into character, and a happy talent of correcting the popular opinoin upon all occasions where it is erroneous; and this he does with the boldness of a man who will think for himself, but at the same time with a justness of sentiment that convinces us he does not differ from others through affectation, but because he has a sounder judgment. This remark, however, has his narrative for its object rather than his critical performance. In the latter I do not think him always just, when he departs from the general opinion. He finds no beauties in Milton's Lycidas. He pours contempt upon Prior, to such a degree, that, were he really as undeserving of notice as he represents him, he ought no longer to be numbered among the poets. These indeed are the two capital instances in which he has offended me. There are others less important, which I have not room to enumerate, and in which I am less confident that he is wrong. What suggested to him the thought that the Alma was written in imitation of Hudibras, I cannot conceive. In former years, they were both favorites of mine, and I often read them; but never saw in them the least resemblance to each other; nor do I now, except that they are composed in verse of the same measure. After all, it is a melancholy observation, which it is impossible not to make, after having run through this series of poetical lives, that where there were such shining talents there should be so little virtue. These luminaries of our country seem to have been kindled into a brighter blaze than others only that their spots might be more noticed! So much can nature do for our intellectual part, and so little for our moral. What vanity,

* Private correspondence.

what petulance in Pope! How painfully sensible of censure, and yet how restless in provocation! To what mean artifices could Addison stoop, in hopes of injuring the reputation of his friend! Savage, how sordidly vicious! and the more condemned for the pains that are taken to palliate his vices. Offensive as they appear through a veil, how would they disgust without one! What a sycophant to the public taste was Dryden; sinning against his feelings, lewd in his writings, though chaste in his conversation. I know not but one might search these eight volumes with a candle, as the prophet says, to find a man, and not find one, unless perhaps Arbuthnot were he. I shall begin Beattie this evening, and propose to myself much satisfaction in reading him. In him at least I shall find a man whose faculties have now and then a glimpse from heaven upon them; a man, not indeed in possession of much evangelical light, but faithful to what he has, and never neglecting an opportunity to use it! How much more respectable such a character than that of thousands who would call him blind, and yet have not the grace to practise half his virtues! He too is a poet and wrote the Minstrel. The specimens which I have seen of it pleased me much. If you have the whole, I should be glad to read it. I may perhaps, since you allow me the liberty, indulge myself here and there with a marginal annotation, but shall not use that allowance wantonly, so as to deface the volumes.

Yours, my dear William, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 29, 1784.

My dear Friend,—It being his majesty's pleasure that I should yet have another opportunity to write before he dissolves the parliament, I avail myself of it with all possible alacrity. I thank you for your last, which was not the less welcome for coming, like an extraordinary gazette, at a time when it was not expected.

As, when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchard-side, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element as shrimps or cockles, that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water-mark, by the usual dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlor, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when, to our unspeakable surprise, a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys hallooed, and the maid announced Mr. G——. Puss* was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back-door, as the only possible way of approach.

Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlor were filled. Mr. G——, advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many more as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. A——, addressing himself to me at that moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying that if I had any, I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. G—— squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a ribbon from his button-hole. The boys hallooed, the dogs barked, Puss scampered, the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more. I thought myself however happy in being able to affirm truly that I had not that influence for which he sued, and for which, had I been possessed of it, with my present views of the dispute between the Crown and the Commons,† I must have refused him, for he is on the side of the former. It is comfortable to be of no consequence in a world, where one cannot exercise any without disobliging somebody. The town however seems to be much at his service, and, if he be equally successful throughout the county, he will undoubtedly gain his election. Mr. A——, perhaps, was a little mortified, be-

* His tame hare.

† We have already stated that Mr. Pitt was frequently outvoted at this time in the House of Commons, but, being supported by the king, did not choose to resign.

cause it was evident that I owed the honor of this visit to his misrepresentation of my importance. But had he thought proper to assure Mr. G—— that I had three heads, I should not I suppose have been bound to produce them.

Mr. S——, who you say was so much admired in your pulpit, would be equally admired in his own, at least by all capable judges, were he not so apt to be angry with his congregation. This hurts him, and, had he the understanding and eloquence of Paul himself, would still hurt him. He seldom, hardly ever, indeed, preaches a gentle, well-tempered sermon, but I hear it highly commended: but warmth of temper, indulged to a degree that may be called scolding, defeats the end of preaching. It is a misapplication of his powers, which it also cripples, and teases away his hearers. But he is a good man, and may perhaps outgrow it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April, 1784.

People that are but little acquainted with the terrors of divine wrath, are not much afraid of trifling with their Maker. But, for my own part, I would sooner take Empedocle's leap, and fling myself into Mount Ætna than I would do it in the slightest instance, were I in circumstances to make an election. In the scripture we find a broad and clear exhibition of mercy; it is displayed in every page. Wrath is, in comparison, but slightly touched upon, because it is not so much a discovery of wrath as of forgiveness. But, had the displeasure of God been the principal subject of the book, and had it circumstantially set forth that measure of it only which may be endured even in this life, the Christian world perhaps would have been less comfortable; but I believe presumptuous meddlers with the gospel would have been less frequently met with. The word is a flaming sword; and he that touches it with unhallowed fingers, thinking to make a tool of it, will find that he has burned them.

What havoc in Calabria! Every house is built upon the sand, whose inhabitants have no God or only a false one. Solid and fluid are such in respect to each other; but with reference to the divine power they are equally fixed or equally unstable. The inhabitants of a rock shall sink, while a cock-boat shall save a man alive in the midst of the fathomless ocean. The Pope grants dispensations for folly and madness during the carnival. But it seems they are as offensive to him, whose vicegerent he pretends himself, at that season as at any other. Were I a Calabrian, I would not give my papa at Rome one farthing for his amplest indulgence, from this time forth forever. There is a word that makes this world tremble; and the Pope cannot countermand it. A fig for such a conjurer! Pharaoh's conjurers had twice his ability.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours, W. C.

We have already alluded to this awful catastrophe, which occurred Feb. 5, 1783, though the shocks of earthquake continued to be felt sensibly, but less violently, till May 23rd. The motions of the earth are described as having been various, either whirling like a vortex, horizontally, or by pulsations and beatings from the bottom upwards; the rains continual and violent, often accompanied with lightning and irregular and furious gusts of wind. The sum total of the mortality in Calabria and Sicily, by the earthquakes alone, as returned to the Secretary of State's office, in Naples, was 32,367; and, including other casualties, was estimated at 40,000.*

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, April 5, 1784.

My dear William,—I thanked you in my last for Johnson; I now thank you with more emphasis for Beattie, the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with—the only author I have seen whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject and the leanest a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease, too, that his own character appears in every page, and, which is very rare, we see not only the writer but the man; and that man so gentle, so well-tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him if one has any sense of what is lovely. If you have not his poem called the Minstrel, and cannot borrow it, I must beg you to buy it for me; for, though I cannot afford to deal largely in so expensive a commodity as books, I must afford to purchase at least the poetical works of Beattie. I have read six of Blair's Lectures, and what do I say of Blair? That he is a sensible man, master of his subject, and, excepting here and there a Scotticism, a good writer, so far at least as perspicuity of expression and method contribute to make one. But, O the sterility of that man's fancy! if indeed he has any such faculty belonging to him. Perhaps philosophers, or men designed for such, are sometimes born without one; or perhaps it withers for want of exercise. However that may be, Dr. Blair has such a brain as Shakspeare somewhere describes

* See Sir William Hamilton's account of this awful event.

—"dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage."*

I take it for granted, that these good men are philosophically correct (for they are both agreed upon the subject) in their account of the origin of language: and, if the Scripture had left us in the dark upon that article, I should very readily adopt their hypothesis for want of better information. I should suppose, for instance, that man made his first effort in speech, in the way of an interjection, and that ah! or oh! being uttered with wonderful gesticulation, and variety of attitude, must have left his powers of expression quite exhausted: that in a course of time he would invent many names for many things, but first for the objects of his daily wants. An apple would consequently be called an apple, and perhaps not many years would elapse before the appellation would receive the sanction of general use. In this case, and upon this supposition, seeing one in the hand of another man, he would exclaim, with a most moving pathos, "Oh apple!"—well and good—oh apple! is a very affecting speech, but in the meantime it profits him nothing. The man that holds it, eats it, and *he* goes away with Oh apple in his mouth, and with nothing better. Reflecting on his disappointment, and that perhaps it arose from his not being more explicit, he contrives a term to denote his idea of transfer or gratuitous communication, and, the next occasion that offers of a similar kind, performs his part accordingly. His speech now stands thus, "Oh give apple!" The apple-holder perceives himself called on to part with his fruit, and having satisfied his own hunger, is perhaps not unwilling to do so. But unfortunately there is still room for a mistake, and a third person being present he gives the apple to *him*. Again disappointed, and again perceiving that his language has not all the precision that is requisite, the orator retires to his study, and there, after much deep thinking, conceives that the insertion of a pronoun, whose office shall be to signify that he not only wants the apple to be given, but given to himself, will remedy all defects, he uses it the next opportunity, and succeeds to a wonder, obtains the apple, and by his success, such credit to his invention, that pronouns continue to be in great repute ever after.

Now, as my two syllable-mongers, Beattie and Blair, both agree that language was originally inspired, and that the great variety of languages we find upon earth at present took its rise from the confusion of tongues at Babel, I am not perfectly convinced that there is any just occasion to invent this very ingenious solution of a difficulty which Scripture has solved already. My opinion, however, is, if I may presume to have an opinion of my own, so different from theirs, who are so much wiser than myself, that, if a man had been his own teacher, and had acquired his words and his phrases only as necessity or convenience had prompted, his progress must have been considerably slower than it was, and in Homer's days the production of such a poem as the Iliad impossible. On the contrary, I doubt not Adam, on the very day of his creation, was able to express himself in terms both forcible and elegant, and that he was at no loss for sublime diction and logical combination, when he wanted to praise his Maker.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

* This criticism on Blair's Lectures seems to be too severe. There was a period when his Sermons were among the most admired productions of the day; sixty thousand copies, it was said, were sold. They formed the standard of divinity fifty years ago: but they are now justly considered to be deficient, in not exhibiting the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel, and to be merely entitled to the praise of being a beautiful system of ethics.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 15, 1784.

My dear William,—I wish I had both burning words and bright thoughts. But I have at present neither. My head is not itself. Having had an unpleasant night and a melancholy day, and having already written a long letter, I do not find myself in point of spirits at all qualified either to burn or shine. The post sets out early on Tuesday. The morning is the only time of exercise with me. In order therefore to keep it open for that purpose, and to comply with your desire of an immediate answer, I give you as much as I can spare of the present evening.

Since I despatched my last, Blair has crept a little farther into my favor. As his subjects improve, he improves with them: but upon the whole I account him a dry writer, useful no doubt as an instructor, but as little entertaining as, with so much knowledge, it is possible to be. His language is (except Swift's) the least figurative I remember to have seen, and the few figures found in it are not always happily employed. I take him to be a critic very little animated by what he reads, who rather reasons about the beauties of an author than really tastes them, and who finds that a passage is praiseworthy, not because it charms him, but because it is accommodated to the laws of criticism in that case made and provided. I have a little complied with your desire of marginal annotations, and should have dealt in them more largely had I read the books to myself; but, being reader to the ladies, I have not always time to settle my own opinion of a doubtful expression, much less to suggest an emendation. I have not censured a particular observation in the book, though, when I met with it, it displeased me. I this moment recollect it, and may as well therefore note

it here. He is commending, and deservedly, that most noble description of a thunder-storm in the first Georgic, which ends with

. . . . Ingeminant austri et densissimus imber.

Being in haste, I do not refer to the volume for his very words, but my memory will serve me with the matter. When poets describe, he says, they should always select such circumstances of the subject as are least obvious, and therefore most striking. He therefore admires the effects of the thunderbolt, splitting mountains, and filling a nation with astonishment, but quarrels with the closing member of the period, as containing particulars of a storm not worthy of Virgil's notice, because obvious to the notice of all. But here I differ from him; not being able to conceive that wind and rain can be improper in the description of a tempest, or how wind and rain could possibly be more poetically described. Virgil is indeed remarkable for finishing his periods well, and never comes to a stop but with the most consummate dignity of numbers and expression, and in the instance in question I think his skill in this respect is remarkably displayed. The line is perfectly majestic in its march. As to the wind, it is such only as the word *ingeminant* could describe and the words *densissimus imber* give one an idea of a shower indeed, but of such a shower as is not very common, and such a one as only Virgil could have done justice to by a single epithet. Far therefore from agreeing with the Doctor in his stricture, I do not think the Æneid contains a nobler line, or a description more magnificently finished.

We are glad that Dr. C—— has singled you out upon this occasion. Your performance we doubt not will justify his choice: fear not, you have a heart that can feel upon charitable occasions, and therefore will not fail you upon this. The burning words will come fast enough when the sensibility is such as yours.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

The ingenuity and humor of the following verses as well as their poetical merit, give them a just claim to admiration.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, April 25, 1784.

My dear William,—Thanks for the fish, with its companion, a lobster, which we mean to eat to-morrow.

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALYBUTT ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784.

Where hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? when wast thou an egg new-spawn'd
Lost in th' immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep thy cradle, thou wast safe.
And in thy minikin and embryo state.
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia, just emerging, peeps
Above the brine—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulf, [well!
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee
Thy lot, thy brethren of the slimy fin [doom'd
Would envy, could they know that thou wast
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 26, 1784.

We are glad that your book runs. It will not indeed satisfy those whom nothing could satisfy but your accession to their party; but the liberal will say you do well, and it is in the opinion of such men only that you can feel yourself interested.

I have lately been employed in reading Beattie and Blair's Lectures. The latter I have not yet finished. I find the former the most agreeable of the two, indeed the most entertaining writer upon dry subjects I ever met with. His imagination is highly poetical, his language easy and elegant, and his manner so familiar that we seem to be conversing with an old friend upon terms of the most sociable intercourse while we read him. Blair is on the contrary rather stiff, not that his style is pedantic, but his air is formal. He is a sensible man, and understands his subjects, but too conscious that he is addressing the public, and too solicitous about his success, to indulge himself for a moment in that play of fancy which makes the other so agreeable. In Blair we find a scholar, in Beattie both a scholar and an amiable man, indeed so amiable that I have wished for his acquaintance ever since I read his book. Having never in my life perused a page of Aristotle, I am glad to have had an opportunity of learning more than (I suppose) he would have taught me, from the writings of two modern critics. I felt myself too a little disposed to compliment my own acumen upon the occasion. For, though the art of writing and composing was never much my study, I did not find that they had any great news to

* Private correspondence.

tell me. They have assisted me in putting my observations into some method, but have not suggested many of which I was not by some means or other previously apprized. In fact, critics did not originally beget authors, but authors made critics. Common sense dictated to writers the necessity of method, connexion, and thoughts congruous to the nature of their subject; genius prompted them with embellishments, and then came the critics. Observing the good effects of an attention to these items, they enacted laws for the observance of them in time to come, and, having drawn their rules for good writing from what was actually well written, boasted themselves the inventors of an art which yet the authors of the day had already exemplified. They are however useful in their way, giving us at one view a map of the boundaries which propriety sets to fancy, and serving as judges to whom the public may at once appeal, when pestered with the vagaries of those who have had the hardiness to transgress them.

The canditades for this county have set an example of economy which other candidates would do well to follow, having come to an agreement on both sides to defray the expenses of their voters, but to open no houses for the entertainment of the rabble; a reform however, which the rabble did not at all approve of, and testified their dislike of it by a riot. A stage was built, from which the orators had designed to harangue the electors. This became the first victim of their fury. Having very little curiosity to hear what gentlemen could say who would give them nothing better than words, they broke it in pieces, and threw the fragments upon the hustings. The sheriff, the members, the lawyers, the voters, were instantly put to flight. They rallied, but were again routed by a second assault like the former. They then proceeded to break the windows of the inn to which they had fled; and a fear prevailing that at night they would fire the town, a proposal was made by the freeholders to face about, and endeavor to secure them. At that instant a rioter, dressed in a merry Andrew's jacket, stepped forward and challenged the best man among them. Olney sent the hero to the field, who made him repent of his presumption: Mr. A—— was he. Seizing him by the throat, he shook him—he threw him to the earth, he made the hollowness of his scull resound by the application of his fists, and dragged him into custody without the least damage to his person. Animated by this example, the other freeholders followed it, and in five minutes twenty-eight out of thirty ragamuffins were safely lodged in gaol. Adieu my dear friend.

We love you, and are yours,

W. & M.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 3, 1784.

My dear Friend,—The subject of face-painting may be considered (I think) in two points of view. First, there is room for dispute with respect to the consistency of the practice with good morals; and, secondly, whether it be on the whole convenient or not may be a matter worthy of agitation. I set out with all the formality of logical disquisition, but do not promise to observe the same regularity any farther than it may comport with my purpose of writing as fast as I can.

As to the immorality of the custom, were I in France, I should see none. On the contrary, it seems in that country to be a symptom of modest consciousness and a tacit confession of what all know to be true, that French faces have in fact neither red nor white of their own. This humble acknowledgment of a defect looks the more like a virtue, being found among a people not remarkable for humility. Again, before we can prove the practice to be immoral, we must prove immorality in the design of those who use it; either, that they intend a deception or to kindle unlawful desires in the beholders. But the French ladies, as far as their purpose comes in question, must be acquitted of both these charges. Nobody supposes their color to be natural for a moment, any more than if it were blue or green: and this unambiguous judgment of the matter is owing to two causes; first, to the universal knowledge we have that French women are naturally brown or yellow, with very few exceptions, and, secondly, to the inartificial manner in which they paint: for they do not, as I am satisfactorily informed, even attempt an imitation of nature, but besmear themselves hastily and at a venture, anxious only to lay on enough. Where, therefore, there is no wanton intention nor a wish to deceive, I can discover no immorality. But in England (I am afraid) our painted ladies are not clearly entitled to the same apology. They even imitate nature with such exactness that the whole public is sometimes divided into parties, who litigate with great warmth the question, whether painted or not. This was remarkably the case with a Miss B——, whom I well remember. Her roses and lilies were never discovered to be spurious till she attained an age that made the supposition of their being natural impossible. This anxiety to be not merely red and white, which is all they aim at in France, but to be thought very beautiful and much more beautiful than nature has made them, is a symptom not very favorable to the idea we would wish to entertain of the chastity, purity, and modesty of our countrywomen. That they are guilty of a design to deceive is certain: otherwise, why so much art? and if to deceive, wherefore

and with what purpose? Certainly either to gratify vanity of the silliest kind, or, which is still more criminal, to decoy and inveigle, and carry on more successfully the business of temptation. Here therefore my opinion splits itself into two opposite sides upon the same question. I can suppose a French woman, though painted an inch deep, to be a virtuous, discreet, excellent character, and in no instance should I think the worse of one because she was painted. But an English belle must pardon me if I have not the same charity for her. She is at least an impostor, whether she cheats me or not, because she means to do so; and it is well if that be all the censure she deserves.

This brings me to my second class of ideas upon this topic: and here I feel that I should be fearfully puzzled were I called upon to recommend the practice on the score of convenience. If a husband chose that his wife should paint, perhaps it might be her duty as well as her interest to comply; but I think he would not much consult his own for reasons that will follow. In the first place she would admire herself the more, and, in the next, if she managed the matter well, she might be more admired by others; an acquisition that might bring her virtue under trials to which otherwise it might never have been exposed. In no other case, however, can I imagine the practice in this country to be either expedient or convenient. As a general one, it certainly is not expedient, because in general English women have no occasion for it. A swarthy complexion is a rarity here, and the sex, especially since inoculation has been so much in use, have very little cause to complain that nature has not been kind to them in the article of complexion. They may hide and spoil a good one, but they cannot (at least they hardly can) give themselves a better. But, even if they could, there is yet a tragedy in the sequel, which should make them tremble. I understand that in France, though the use of rouge be general, the use of white paint is far from being so. In England, she that uses one commonly uses both. Now all white paints, or lotions, or whatever they be called, are mercurial, consequently poisonous, consequently ruinous in time to the constitution. The Miss B—— above mentioned, was a miserable witness of this truth, it being certain that her flesh fell from her bones before she died. Lady C—— was hardly a less melancholy proof of it; and a London physician perhaps, were he at liberty to blab, could publish a bill of female mortality of a length that would astonish us.

For these reasons I utterly condemn the practice as it obtains in England; and for a reason superior to all these I must disapprove it. I cannot indeed discover that Scripture forbids it in so many words. But that anxious solicitude about the person which such an artifice evidently betrays is, I am sure, contrary to the tenor and spirit of it throughout. Show me a woman with a painted face, and I will show you a woman whose heart is set on things of the earth, and not on things above. But this observation of mine applies to it only when it is an imitative art: for, in the use of French women, I think it as innocent as in the use of the wild Indian, who draws a circle round her face, and makes two spots, perhaps blue, perhaps white, in the middle of it. Such are my thoughts upon the matter.

Vive, valeque.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, May 8, 1784.

My dear Friend,—You do well to make your letters merry ones, though not very merry yourself, and that both for my sake and your own; for your own sake, because it sometimes happens that, by assuming an air of cheerfulness, we become cheerful in reality; and for mine, because I have always more need of a laugh than a cry, being somewhat disposed to melancholy by natural temperament, as well as by other causes.

It was long since, and even in the infancy of John Gilpin, recommended to me by a lady, now at Bristol, to write a sequel. But, having always observed that authors, elated with the success of a first part, have fallen below themselves when they have attempted a second, I had more prudence than to take her counsel. I want you to read the history of that hero published by Bladon, and to tell me what it is made of. But buy it not. For, puffed as it is in the papers, it can be but a bookseller's job, and must be dear at the price of two shillings. In the last packet but one that I received from Johnson, he asked me if I had any improvements of John Gilpin in hand, or if I designed any; for that to print only the original again would be to publish what has been hackneyed in every magazine, in every newspaper, and in every street. I answered that the copy which I sent him contained two or three small variations from the first, except which I had none to propose; and if he thought him now too trite to make a part of my volume, I should willingly acquiesce in his judgment. I take it for granted therefore that he will not bring up the rear of my Poems according to my first intention, and shall not be sorry for the omission. It may spring from a principle of pride; but spring from what it may, I feel and have long felt a disinclination to a public avowal that he is mine; and since he became so popular, I have felt it more than ever; not that I should ever have expressed a scruple, if Johnson had not. But a fear has suggested itself to me, that I

might expose myself to a charge of vanity by admitting him into my book, and that some people would impute it to me as a crime. Consider what the world is made of, and you will not find my suspicions chimerical. Add to this, that when, on correcting the latter part of the fifth book of "The Task," I came to consider the solemnity and sacred nature of the subjects there handled, it seemed to me an incongruity at the least, not to call it by a harsher name, to follow up such premises with such a conclusion. I am well content therefore with having laughed, and made others laugh; and will build my hopes of success as a poet upon more important matter.

In our printing business we now jog on merrily enough. The coming week will I hope bring me to an end of "The Task," and the next fortnight to an end of the whole. I am glad to have Paley on my side in the affair of education. He is certainly on all subjects a sensible man, and, on such, a wise one. But I am mistaken if "Tirocinium" do not make some of my friends angry, and procure me enemies not a few. There is a sting in verse that prose neither has nor can have; and I do not know that schools in the gross, and especially public schools, have ever been so pointedly condemned before. But they are become a nuisance, a pest, an abomination; and it is fit that the eyes and noses of mankind should if possible be opened to perceive it.

This is indeed an author's letter; but it is an author's letter to his friend. If you will be the friend of an author, you must expect such letters. Come July, and come yourself, with as many of your exterior selves as can possibly come with you!

Yours, my dear William, affectionately, and with your mother's remembrances. Adieu,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, May 10, 1784.

My dear Friend,—We rejoice in the account you give us of Dr. Johnson. His conversion will indeed be a singular proof the omnipotence of grace; and the more singular, the more decided. The world will set his age against his wisdom, and comfort itself with the thought that he must be superannuated. Perhaps therefore in order to refute the slander, and do honor to the cause to which he becomes a convert, he could not do better than devote his great abilities, and a considerable part of the remainder of his years, to the production of some important work, not immediately connected with the interests of religion. He would thus give proof that a man of profound learning and the best sense may become a child without being a fool; and that to embrace the gospel is no evidence either of enthusiasm, infirmity, or insanity. But He who calls him will direct him.

On Friday, by particular invitation, we attended an attempt to throw off a balloon at Mr. Throckmorton's, but it did not succeed. We expect however to be summoned again in the course of the ensuing week. Mrs. Unwin and I were the party. We were entertained with the utmost politeness. It is not possible to conceive a more engaging and agreeable character than the gentleman's, or a more consummate assemblage of all that is called good-nature, complaisance, and innocent cheerfulness, than is to be seen in the lady. They have lately received many gross affronts from the people of this place, on account of their religion. We thought it therefore the more necessary to treat them with respect.

Best love and best wishes, W. C.

We think there must be an error of date in this letter, because the period of time generally ascribed to the fact recorded in the former part of it, occurred in the last illness of Dr. Johnson, which was in December, 1784. A discussion has arisen respecting the circumstances of this case, but not as to the fact itself. As regards this latter point, it is satisfactorily established that Dr. Johnson, throughout a long life, had been peculiarly harassed by fears of death, from which he was at length happily delivered, and enabled to die in peace. This happy change of mind is generally attributed to the Rev. Mr. Latrobe having attended him on his dying bed, and directed him to the only sure ground of acceptance, viz., a reliance upon God's promises of mercy in Christ Jesus. The truth of this statement rests on the testimony of the Rev. Christian Ignatius Latrobe, who received the account from his own father. Some again assign the instrumentality to another pious individual, Mr. Winstanley.* We do not see why the services of both may not have been simultaneously employed, and equally crowned with success. It is the fact itself which most claims our own attention. We here see a man of profound learning and great moral attainments deficient in correct views of the grand fundamental doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of the atonement; and consequently unable to look forward to eternity without alarm. We believe this state of mind to be peculiar to many who are distinguished by genius and learning. The gospel, clearly understood in its design, as a revelation of mercy to every penitent and believing sinner, and cordially received into the heart, dispels these fears, and by directing the eye of faith to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, will in-

* Private correspondence.

* See "Christian Observer," Jan., 1835.

fallibly fill the mind with that blessed hope which is full of life and immortality.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, May 22, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I am glad to have received at last an account of Dr. Johnson's favorable opinion of my book. I thought it wanting, and had long since concluded that, not having the happiness to please him, I owed my ignorance of his sentiments to the tenderness of my friends at Hoxton, who would not mortify me with an account of his disapprobation. It occurs to me that I owe him thanks for interposing between me and the resentment of the Reviewers, who seldom show mercy to an advocate for evangelical truth, whether in prose or verse. I therefore enclose a short acknowledgment, which, if you see no impropriety in the measure, you can, I imagine, without much difficulty, convey to him through the hands of Mr. Latrobe. If on any account you judge it an inexpedient step, you can very easily suppress the letter.

I pity Mr. Bull. What harder task can any man undertake than the management of those who have reached the age of manhood without having ever felt the force of authority, or passed through any of the preparatory parts of education? I had either forgot, or never adverted to the circumstance, that his disciples were to be men. At present, however, I am not surprised that, being such, they are found disobedient, untractable, insolent, and conceited; qualities that generally prevail in the minds of adults in exact proportion to their ignorance. He dined with us since I received your last. It was on Thursday that he was here. He came dejected, burthened, full of complaints. But we sent him away cheerful. He is very sensible of the prudence, delicacy, and attention to his character, which the Society have discovered in their conduct towards him upon this occasion; and indeed it does them honor; for it were past all enduring, if a charge of insufficiency should obtain a moment's regard, when brought by five such coxcombs against a man of his erudition and ability.* Lady Austen is gone to Bath.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, June 5, 1784.

When you told me that the critique upon my volume was written, though not by Doctor Johnson himself, yet by a friend of his, to whom he recommended the book and the business, I inferred from that expression that I was indebted to him for an active interposition in my favor, and consequently that he had a right to thanks. But now I concur entirely in sentiment with you, and heartily second your vote for the suppression of thanks which do not seem to be much called for. Yet even now, were it possible that I could fall into his company, I should not think a slight acknowledgment misapplied. I was no other way anxious about his opinion, nor could be so, after you and some others had given a favorable one, than it was natural I should be, knowing as I did that his opinion had been consulted.

I am affectionately yours, W. C.

* A spirit of insubordination had manifested itself at the Theological Seminary at Newport, under the superintendence of Mr. Bull.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, June 21, 1784.

My dear Friend,—We are much pleased with your designed improvement of the late preposterous celebration, and have no doubt that in good hands the foolish occasion will turn to good account. A religious service, instituted in honor of a musician, and performed in the house of God, is a subject that calls loudly for the animadversion of an enlightened minister; and would be no mean one for a satirist, could a poet of that description be found spiritual enough to feel and to resent the profanation. It is reasonable to suppose that in the next year's almanac we shall find the name of Handel among the red-lettered worthies, for it would surely puzzle the Pope to add anything to his canonization.

This unpleasant summer makes me wish for winter. The gloominess of that season is the less felt, both because it is expected, and because the days are short. But such weather, when the days are longest, makes a double winter, and my spirits feel that it does. We have now frosty mornings, and so cold a wind that even at high noon we have been obliged to break off our walk in the southern side of the garden, and seek shelter, I in the greenhouse, and Mrs. Unwin by the fireside. Haymaking begins here tomorrow, and would have begun sooner, had the weather permitted it.

Mr. Wright called upon us last Sunday. The old gentleman seems happy in being exempted from the effects of time to such a degree that, though we meet but once in the year, I cannot perceive that the twelve months that have elapsed have made any change in him. It seems, however, that as much as he loves his master, and as easy as I suppose he has always found his service, he now and then heaves a sigh for liberty, and wishes to taste it before he dies. But his wife is not so minded. She cannot leave a family, the

* Private correspondence.

sons and daughters of which seem all to be her own. Her brother died lately in the East Indies, leaving twenty thousand pounds behind him, and half of it to her; but the ship that was bringing home this treasure is supposed to be lost. Her husband appears perfectly unaffected by the misfortune, and she perhaps may even be glad of it. Such an acquisition would have forced her into a state of independence, and made her her own mistress, whether she would or not. I charged him with a petition to Lord Dartmouth, to send me Cook's last Voyage, which I have a great curiosity to see, and no other means of procuring. I dare say I shall obtain the favor, and have great pleasure in taking my last trip with a voyager whose memory I respect so much. Farewell, my dear friend: our affectionate remembrances are faithful to you and yours. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.*

Olney, July 3, [probably 1784.]

My dear Friend,—I am writing in the greenhouse for retirement's sake, where I shiver with cold on this present 3d of July. Summer and winter therefore do not depend on the position of the sun with respect to the earth, but on His appointment who is sovereign in all things. Last Saturday night the cold was so severe that it pinched off many of the young shoots of our peach-trees. The nurseryman we deal with informs me that the wall-trees are almost everywhere cut off; and that a friend of his, near London, has lost all the full-grown fruit-trees of an extensive garden. The very walnuts, which are now no bigger than small hazel-nuts, drop to the ground, and the flowers, though they blow, seem to have lost all their odors. I walked with your mother yesterday in the garden, wrapped up in a winter surtout, and found myself not at all incumbered by it; not more indeed than I was in January. Cucumbers contract that spot which is seldom found upon them except late in the autumn; and melons hardly grow. It is a comfort however to reflect that, if we cannot have these fruits in perfection, neither do we want them. Our crops of wheat are said to be very indifferent; the stalks of an unequal height, so that some of the ears are in danger of being smothered by the rest; and the ears, in general, lean and scanty. I never knew a summer in which we had not now and then a cold day to conflict with; but such a wintry fortnight as the last, at this season of the year, I never remember. I fear you have made the discovery of the webs you mention a day too late. The vermin have probably by this time left them, and may laugh at all human attempts to destroy them. For every web they have hung upon the trees and bushes this year, you will next year probably find fifty, perhaps a hundred. Their increase is almost infinite; so that, if Providence does not interfere, and man see fit to neglect them, the laughers you mention may live to be sensible of their mistake. Love to all.

Yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 5, 1784.

My dear Friend,—A dearth of materials, a consciousness that my subjects are for the most part, and must be, uninteresting and unimportant, but above all, a poverty of animal spirits, that makes writing much a great fatigue to me, have occasioned my choice of smaller paper. Acquiesce in the justice of these reasons for the present; and, if ever the times should mend with me, I sincerely promise to amend with them.

Homer says, on a certain occasion, that Jupiter, when he was wanted at home, was gone to partake of an entertainment provided for him by the Æthiopians. If by Jupiter we understand the weather, or the season, as the ancients frequently did, we may say that our English Jupiter has been absent on account of some such invitation: during the whole month of June he left us to experience almost the rigors of winter. This fine day, however, affords us some hope that the feast is ended, and that we shall enjoy his company without the interference of his Æthiopian friends again.

Is it possible that the wise men of antiquity could entertain a real reverence for the fabulous rubbish which they dignified with the name of religion? We, who have been favored from our infancy with so clear a light, are perhaps hardly competent to decide the question, and may strive in vain to imagine the absurdities that even a good understanding may receive as truths, when totally unaided by revelation. It seems, however, that men, whose conceptions upon other subjects were often sublime, whose reasoning powers were undoubtedly equal to our own, and whose management in matters of jurisprudence, that required a very industrious examination of evidence, was as acute and subtle as that of a modern Attorney-general, could not be the dupes of such imposture as a child among us would detect and laugh at. Juvenal, I remember, introduces one of his Satires with an observation that there were some in his day who had the hardiness to laugh at the stories of Tartarus and Styx, and Charon, and of the frogs that croak upon the banks of the Lethe, giving his reader, at the same time, cause to suspect that he was

himself one of that profane number. Horace, on the other hand, declares in sober sadness, that he would not for all the world get into a boat with a man who had divulged the Eleusinian mysteries. Yet we know that those mysteries, whatever they might be, were altogether as unworthy to be esteemed divine, as the mythology of the vulgar. How, then, must we determine? If Horace were a good and orthodox heathen, how came Juvenal to be such an ungracious libertine in principle as to ridicule the doctrines which the other held as sacred? Their opportunities of information, and their mental advantages, were equal. I feel myself rather inclined to believe that Juvenal's avowed infidelity was sincere, and that Horace was no better than a canting, hypocritical professor.*

You must grant me a dispensation for saying anything, whether it be sense or nonsense, upon the subject of politics. It is truly a matter in which I am so little interested, that, were it not that it sometimes serves me for a theme when I can find no other, I should never mention it. I would forfeit a large sum, if, after advertising a month in the Gazette, the minister of the day, whoever he may be, could discover a man who cares about him or his measures so little as I do. When I say that I would forfeit a large sum, I mean to have it understood that I would forfeit such a sum if I had it. If Mr. Pitt be indeed a virtuous man, as such I respect him. But, at the best, I fear he will have to say at last with Æneas,

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiâm hâc defensa fuissent.

Be he what he may, I do not like his taxes. At least, I am much disposed to quarrel with some of them. The additional duty upon candles, by which the poor will be much affected, hurts me most. He says indeed that they will but little feel it, because even now they can hardly afford the use of them. He had certainly put no compassion into his budget, when he produced from it this tax, and such an argument to support it. Justly translated, it seems to amount to this—"Make the necessaries of life too expensive for the poor to reach them, and you will save their money. If they buy but few candles, they will pay but little tax; and if they buy none, the tax, as to them, will be annihilated." True. But in the meantime they will break their shins against their furniture, if they have any, and will be but little the richer when the hours in which they might work, if they could see, shall be deducted.

I have bought a great dictionary, and want nothing but Latin authors to furnish me with the use of it. Had I purchased them first, I had begun at the right end; but I could not afford it. I beseech you admire my prudence.

Vivite, valete, et mementote nostrûm.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

* Some of the learned have been inclined to believe that the Eleusinian mysteries inculcated a rejection of the absurd mythology of those times, and a belief in one Great Supreme Being.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 12, 1784.

My dear William,—I think with you that Vinny's* line is not pure. If he knew any authority that would have justified his substitution of a participle for a substantive, he would have done well to have noted it in the margin; but I am much inclined to think that he did not. Poets are sometimes exposed to difficulties insurmountable by lawful means, whence I imagine was originally derived that indulgence that allows them the use of what is called the *poetica licentia*. But that liberty, I believe, contents itself with the abbreviation or protraction of a word, or an alteration in the quantity of a syllable, and never presumes to trespass upon grammatical propriety. I have dared to attempt to correct my master, but am not bold enough to say that I have succeeded. Neither am I sure that my memory serves me correctly with the line that follows; but when I recollect the English, am persuaded that it cannot differ much from the true one. This therefore is my edition of the passage—

Basia amatori tot tum permissa beato;

Or,

Basia quæ juveni indulsit Susanna beato
Navarcha optaret maximus esse sua.

The preceding lines I have utterly forgotten, and am consequently at a loss to know whether the distich, thus managed, will connect itself with them easily, and as it ought.

We thank you for the drawing of your house. I never knew my idea of what I had never seen resemble the original so much. At some time or other you have doubtless given me an exact account of it, and I have retained the faithful impression made by your description. It is a comfortable abode, and the time I hope will come when I shall enjoy more than the mere representation of it.

I have not yet read the last "Review," but, dipping into it, I accidentally fell upon their account of "Hume's Essay on Suicide." I am glad that they have liberality enough to condemn the licentiousness of an author, whom they so much admire. I say liberality, for there is as much bigotry in the world to that man's errors, as there is in the hearts of some

* Vincent Bourne.

sectaries to their peculiar modes and tenets. He is the Pope of thousands, as blind and presumptuous as himself. God certainly infatuates those who will not see. It were otherwise impossible, that a man, naturally shrewd and sensible, and whose understanding has had all the advantages of constant exercise and cultivation, could have satisfied himself, or have hoped to satisfy others, with such palpable sophistry as has not even the grace of fallacy to recommend it. His silly assertion, that, because it would be no sin to divert the course of the Danube, therefore it is none to let out a few ounces of blood from an artery, would justify not suicide only, but homicide also. For the lives of ten thousand men are of less consequence to their country than the course of that river to the regions through which it flows. Population would soon make society amends for the loss of her ten thousand members, but the loss of the Danube would be felt by all the millions that dwell upon its banks, to all generations. But the life of a man and the water of a river can never come into competition with each other in point of value, unless in the estimation of an unprincipled philosopher.

I thank you for your offer of the classics. When I want I will borrow. Horace is my own. Homer, with a clavis, I have had possession of for some years. They are the property of Mr. Jones. A Virgil, the property of Mr. S——, I have had as long. I am nobody in the affair of tenses, unless when you are present.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 13, 1781.

My dear William,—We rejoice that you had a safe journey, and, though we should have rejoiced still more had you had no occasion for a physician, we are glad that, having had need of one, you had the good fortune to find him—let us hear soon that his advice has proved effectual, and that you are delivered from all ill symptoms.

Thanks for the care you have taken to furnish me with a dictionary: it is rather strange that, at my time of life, and after a youth spent in classical pursuits, I should want one; and stranger still that, being possessed at present of only one Latin author in the world, I should think it worth while to purchase one. I say that it is strange, and indeed I think it so myself. But I have a thought that, when my present labors of the pen are ended, I may go to school again, and refresh my spirits by a little intercourse with the Mantuan and the Sabine bard, and perhaps by a re-perusal of some others, whose works we generally lay by at that period of life when we are best qualified to read them, when, the judgment and the taste being formed, their beauties are least likely to be overlooked.

This change of wind and weather comforts me, and I should have enjoyed the first fine morning I have seen this month with a peculiar relish, if our new tax-maker had not put me out of temper. I am angry with him, not only for the matter, but for the manner of his proposal. When he lays his impost upon horses he is jocular, and laughs, though, considering that wheels, and miles, and grooms were taxed before, a graver countenance upon the occasion would have been more decent. But he provoked me still more by reasoning as he does on the justification of the tax upon candles. Some families he says will suffer little by it. Why? because they are so poor that they cannot afford themselves more than ten pounds in the year. Excellent! They can use but few, therefore they will pay but little, and consequently will be but little burdened: an argument which for its cruelty and effrontery seems worthy of a hero; but he does not avail himself of the whole force of it, nor with all his wisdom had sagacity enough to see that it contains, when pushed to its utmost extent, a free discharge and acquittal of the poor from the payment of any tax at all: a commodity being once made too expensive for their pockets, will cost them nothing, for they will not buy it. Rejoice, therefore, O ye penniless! the minister will indeed send you to bed in the dark, but your remaining halfpenny will be safe; instead of being spent in the useless luxury of candle-light, it will buy you a roll for breakfast, which you will eat no doubt with gratitude to the man who so kindly lessens the number of your disbursements, and, while he seems to threaten your money, saves it. I wish he would remember that the halfpenny which government imposes, the shopkeeper will swell to twopence. I wish he would visit the miserable huts of our lacemakers at Olney, and see them working in the winter months, by the light of a farthing candle, from four in the afternoon till midnight: I wish he had laid his tax upon the ten thousand lamps that illuminate the Pantheon, upon the flambeaux that wait upon ten thousand chariots and sedans in an evening, and upon the wax candles that give light to ten thousand card-tables. I wish, in short, that he would consider the pockets of the poor as sacred, and that to tax a people already so necessitous is but to discourage the little industry that is left among us, by driving the laborious to despair.

A neighbor of mine in Silver-end keeps an ass; the ass lives on the other side of the garden-wall, and I am writing in the greenhouse. It happens that he is this morning most musically disposed, whether cheered by the fine weather, or some new tune which he

has just acquired, or by finding his voice more harmonious than usual. It would be cruel to mortify so fine a singer, therefore I do not tell him that he interrupts and hinders me; but I venture to tell you so, and to plead his performance in excuse for my abrupt conclusion.

I send you the goldfinches, with which you will do as you see good. We have an affectionate remembrance of your late visit, and of all our friends at Stock.

Believe me ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 14, 1784.

My dear Friend,—Notwithstanding the justness of the comparison by which you illustrate the folly and wickedness of a congregation assembled to pay divine honors to the memory of Handel, I could not help laughing at the picture you have drawn of the musical convicts. The subject indeed is awful, and your manner of representing it is perfectly just; yet I laughed, and must have laughed had I been one of your hearers. But the ridicule lies in the preposterous conduct which you reprove, and not in your reproof of it. A people so musically mad as to make not only their future trial the subject of a concert, but even the message of mercy from their King, and the only one he will ever send them, must excuse me if I am merry where there is more cause to be sad; for, melancholy as their condition is, their behavior under it is too ludicrous not to be felt as such, and would conquer even a more settled gravity than mine.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

The Commemoration of Handel, mentioned in the above letter, which was performed with great pomp in a place of religious worship, and accompanied by his celebrated oratorio of the Messiah, was considered by many pious minds to resemble an act of canonization, and therefore censured as profane. Mr. Newton, being at that time rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, in the city, preached a course of sermons on the occasion, and delivered his sentiments on the subject of oratorios generally, but with such originality of thought in the following passage that we insert it for the benefit of those to whom it may be unknown. It is introduced in the beginning of his fourth sermon from Malachi iii. 1—3.

"'Whereunto shall we liken the people of this generation, and to what are they like?' I represent to myself a number of persons, of various characters, involved in one common charge of high treason. They are already in a state of confinement, but not yet brought to their trial. The facts, however, are so plain, and the evidence against them so strong and pointed, that there is not the least doubt of their guilt being fully proved, and that nothing but a pardon can preserve them from punishment. In this situation, it should seem their wisdom to avail themselves of every expedient in their power for obtaining mercy. But they are entirely regardless of their danger, and wholly taken up with contriving methods of amusing themselves, that they may pass away the term of their imprisonment with as much cheerfulness as possible. Among other resources, they call in the assistance of music. And, amidst a great variety of subjects in this way, they are particularly pleased with one: they choose to make the solemnities of their impending trial, the character of their judge, the methods of his procedure, and the awful sentence to which they are exposed, the groundwork of a musical entertainment; and, as if they were quite unconcerned in the event, their attention is chiefly fixed upon the skill of the composer, in adapting the style of his music to the very solemn language and subject with which they are trifling. The King, however, out of his great clemency and compassion towards those who have no pity for themselves, presents them with his goodness: undesired by them, he sends them a gracious message: he assures them, that he is unwilling they should suffer: he requires, yea, he entreats them to submit: he points out a way in which their confession and submission shall be certainly accepted: and, in this way, which he condescends to prescribe, he offers them a free and full pardon. But, instead of taking a single step towards a compliance with his goodness, they set his message likewise to music: and this, together with a description of their present state, and of the fearful doom awaiting them if they continue obstinate, is sung for their diversion: accompanied with the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of instruments. Surely, if such a case as I have supposed could be found in real life, though I might admire the musical taste of these people, I should commiserate their insensibility."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 19, 1784.

In those days when Bedlam was open to the cruel curiosity of holiday ramblers, I have been a visitor there. Though a boy, I was not altogether insensible of the misery of the poor captives, nor destitute of feeling for them. But the madness of some of them had such a humorous air, and displayed itself in so many whimsical freaks, that it was impossible not to be entertained, at the

same time that I was angry with myself for being so. A line of Bourne's is very expressive of the spectacle which this world exhibits, tragi-comical as the incidents of it are, absurd in themselves, but terrible in their consequences;

Sunt res humanæ flebile ludibrium.

An instance of this deplorable merriment has occurred in the course of the last week at Olney. A feast gave the occasion to a catastrophe truly shocking.*

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, July 28, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I may perhaps be short, but am not willing that you should go to Lymington without first having had a line from me. I know that place well, having spent six weeks there above twenty years ago. The town is neat and the country delightful. You walk well, and will consequently find a part of the coast, called Hall-cliff, within the reach of your ten toes. It was a favorite walk of mine; to the best of my remembrance about three miles distant from Lymington. There you may stand upon the beach and contemplate the Needle-rock; at least, you might have done so twenty years ago; but since that time I think it is fallen from its base and is drowned, and is no longer a visible object of contemplation. I wish you may pass your time there happily, as in all probability you will, perhaps usefully too to others, undoubtedly so to yourself.

The manner in which you have been previously made acquainted with Mr. Gilpin gives a providential air to your journey, and affords reason to hope that you may be charged with a message to him. I admire him as a biographer. But, as Mrs. Unwin and I were talking of him last night, we could not but wonder that a man should see so much excellence in the lives, and so much glory and beauty in the death, of the martyrs whom he has recorded, and at the same time disapprove the principles that produced the very conduct he admired. It seems however a step towards the truth to applaud the fruits of it; and one cannot help thinking that one step more would put him in possession of the truth itself. By your means may he be enabled to take it!

We are obliged to you for the preference you would have given to Olney, had not Providence determined your course another way. But as, when we saw you last summer, you gave us no reason to expect you this, we are the less disappointed. At your age and mine, biennial visits have such a gap between them, that we cannot promise ourselves upon those terms very numerous future interviews. But, whether ours are to be many or few, you will always be welcome to me for the sake of the comfortable days that are past. In my present state of mind, my friendship for you indeed is as warm as ever: but I feel myself very indifferently qualified to be your companion. Other days than these inglorious and unprofitable ones are promised me, and when I see them I shall rejoice.

I saw the advertisement of your adversary's book. He is happy at least in this, that, whether he have brains or none, he strikes without the danger of being stricken again. He could not wish to engage in a controversy upon easier terms. The other, whose publication is postponed till Christmas, is resolved I suppose to do something. But, do what he will, he cannot prove that you have not been aspersed, or that you have not refuted the charge; which, unless he can do, I think he will do little to the purpose.

Mrs. Unwin thinks of you, and always with a grateful recollection of yours and Mrs. Newton's kindness. She has had a nervous fever lately; but I hope she is better. The weather forbids walking, a prohibition hurtful to us both.

We heartily wish you a good journey, and are affectionately yours,

W. C. & M. U.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, August 14, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I give you joy of a journey performed without trouble or danger. You have travelled five hundred miles without having encountered either. Some neighbors of ours about a fortnight since, made an excursion only to a neighboring village, and brought home with them fractured sculls and broken limbs, and one of them is dead. For my own part, I seem pretty much exempted from the dangers of the road.—Thanks to that tender interest and concern which the legislature takes in my security! Having, no doubt, their fears lest so precious a life should determine too soon and by some untimely stroke of misadventure, they have made wheels and horses so expensive that I am not likely to owe my death to either.

Your mother and I continue to visit Weston daily, and find in those agreeable bowers such amusement as leaves us but little room to regret that we can go no farther. Having touched that theme, I cannot abstain from the pleasure of telling you that our neighbors in that place being about to leave it for some time, and meeting us there but a few evenings

* We presume that this is the same circumstance of which more particular mention is made in the beginning of the letter to the Rev. Mr. Unwin, Aug. 14, 1784.

before their departure, entreated us, during their absence, to consider the garden and all its contents as our own, and to gather whatever we liked without the least scruple. We accordingly picked strawberries as often as we went, and brought home as many bundles of honeysuckles as served to perfume our dwelling till they returned.

Once more, by the aid of Lord Dartmouth, I find myself a voyager in the Pacific Ocean. In our last night's lecture we made our acquaintance with the island of Hapaee, where we had never been before. The French and Italians, it seems, have but little cause to plume themselves on account of their achievements in the dancing way, and we may hereafter, without much repining at it, acknowledge their superiority in that art. They are equalled, perhaps excelled, by savages. How wonderful that, without any intercourse with a politer world, and having made no proficiency, in any other accomplishment, they should in this however have made themselves such adepts, that for regularity and grace of motion they might even be our masters! How wonderful too that with a tub and a stick they should be able to produce such harmony, as persons accustomed to the sweetest music cannot but hear with pleasure! It is not very difficult to account for the striking difference of character that obtains among the inhabitants of these islands! Many of them are near neighbors to each other; their opportunities of improvement much the same; yet some of them are in a degree polite, discover symptoms of taste, and have a sense of elegance; while others are as rude as we naturally expect to find a people who have never had any communication with the northern hemisphere. These volumes furnish much matter of philosophical speculation, and often entertain me, even while I am not employed in reading them.

I am sorry you have not been able to ascertain the doubtful intelligence I have received on the subject of cork shirts and bosoms. I am now every day occupied in giving all the grace I can to my new production and in transcribing it; I shall soon arrive at the passage that censures that folly, which I shall be loath to expunge, but which I must not spare unless the criminals can be convicted. The world, however, is not so unproductive of subjects of censure, but that it may probably supply me with some other that may serve as well.

If you know anybody that is writing, or intends to write, an epic poem on the new regulation of *franks*, you may give him my compliments, and these two lines for a beginning—

Heu quot amatores nunc torquet epistola rara!
Vectigal certum perituraque gratia Franki!

Yours faithfully, W. C.

We have elsewhere stated that the mode originally used in franking, was for the member to sign his name at the left corner of the letter, with the word "free" attached to it, leaving the writer of the letter to add the superscription at his own convenience. But instances of forgery having become frequent, by persons erasing the word "free," and using the name of the member for fraudulent purposes, a new regulation was adopted at this time to defeat so gross an abuse. In August, 1784, under the act of the 24th of George III., chap. 37, a new enactment passed, prescribing the mode of franking for the future as it is now practised.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, August 16, 1784.

My dear Friend,—Had you not expressed a desire to hear from me before you take leave of Lymington, I certainly should not have answered you so soon. Knowing the place and the amusements it affords, I should have had more modesty than to suppose myself capable of adding anything to your present entertainments worthy to rank with them. I am not, however, totally destitute of such pleasures as an inland country may pretend to. If my windows do not command a view of the ocean, at least they look out upon a profusion of mignonette; which, if it be not so grand an object, is, however, quite as fragrant; and, if I have not an hermit in a grotto, I have, nevertheless, myself in a greenhouse, a less venerable figure perhaps, but not at all less animated than he: nor are we in this nook altogether unfurnished with such means of philosophical experiment and speculation as at present the world rings with. On Thursday morning last, we sent up a balloon from Emberton meadow.—Thrice it rose and as oft descended, and in the evening it performed another flight at Newport, where it went up and came down no more. Like the arrow discharged at the pigeon in the Trojan games, it kindled in the air and was consumed in a moment. I have not heard what interpretation the soothsayers have given to the omen, but shall wonder a little if the Newton shepherd prognosticate anything less from it than the most bloody war that was ever waged in Europe.

I am reading Cook's last Voyage, and am much pleased and amused with it. It seems that in some of the Friendly Isles they excel so much in dancing, and perform that operation with such exquisite delicacy and grace, that they are not surpassed even upon our European stages. Oh! that Vestris had been in the ship, that he might have seen himself outdone by a savage! The paper indeed tells us, that the queen of France has clapped

this king of capers up in prison, for declining to dance before her on a pretence of sickness, when, in fact, he was in perfect health. If this be true, perhaps he may, by this time, be prepared to second such a wish as mine, and to think, that the duranee he suffers would be well exchanged for a dance at Annamooka. I should, however, as little have expected to hear that these islanders had such consummate skill in an art that requires so much taste in the conduct of the person, as that they were good mathematicians and astronomers. Defective as they are in every branch of knowledge, and in every other species of refinement, it seems wonderful that they should arrive at such perfection in the dance, which some of our English gentlemen, with all the assistance of French instruction, find it impossible to learn. We must conclude, therefore, that particular nations have a genius for particular feats, and that our neighbors in France, and our friends in the South Sea, have minds very nearly akin, though they inhabit countries so very remote from each other.

Mrs. Unwin remembers to have been in company with Mr. Gilpin at her brother's. She thought him very sensible and polite, and consequently very agreeable.

We are truly glad that Mrs. Newton and yourself are so well, and that there is reason to hope that Eliza is better. You will learn from this letter that we are so, and that for my own part I am not quite so low in spirits as at some times. Learn too, what you knew before, that we love you all, and that I am your—

Affectionate friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Sept. 11, 1784.

My dear Friend,—You have my thanks for the inquiries you have made. Despairing, however, of meeting with such confirmation of that new mode as would warrant a general stricture, I had, before the receipt of your last, discarded the passage in which I had censured it. I am proceeding in my transcript with all possible despatch, having nearly finished the fourth book, and hoping, by the end of the month, to have completed the work. When finished, that no time may be lost, I purpose taking the first opportunity to transmit it to Leman Street, but must beg that you will give me in your next an exact direction, that it may proceed to the mark without any hazard of a miscarriage. A second transcript of it would be a labor I should very reluctantly undertake; for, though I have kept copies of all the material alterations, there are many minutiæ of which I have made none: it is besides slavish work, and of all occupations that which I dislike the most. I know that you will lose no time in reading it, but I must beg you likewise to lose none in conveying it to Johnson, that, if he chooses to print it, it may go to the press immediately; if not, that it may be offered directly to your friend Longman, or any other. Not that I doubt Johnson's acceptance of it, for he will find it more *ad captum populi* than the former. I have not numbered the lines, except of the four first books, which amount to three thousand two hundred and seventy-six. I imagine, therefore, that the whole contains about five thousand. I mention this circumstance now, because it may save him some trouble in casting the size of the book, and I might possibly forget it in another letter.

About a fortnight since, we had a visit from Mr. ——, whom I had not seen many years. He introduced himself to us very politely, with many thanks on his own part, and on the part of his family, for the amusement which my book has afforded them. He said he was sure that it must make its way, and hoped that I had not laid down the pen. I only told him, in general terms, that the use of the pen was necessary to my well being, but gave him no hint of this last production. He said that one passage in particular had absolutely electrified him, meaning the description of the Briton in Table Talk. He seemed, indeed, to emit some sparks, when he mentioned it. I was glad to have that picture noticed by a man of a cultivated mind, because I had always thought well of it myself, and had never heard it distinguished before. Assure yourself, my William, that though I would not write thus freely on the subject of me or mine, to any but yourself, the pleasure I have in doing it is a most innocent one, and partakes not in the least degree, so far as my conscience is to be credited, of that vanity with which authors are in general so justly chargeable. Whatever I do, I confess that I most sincerely wish to do it well; and when I have reason to hope that I have succeeded, am pleased indeed, but not proud; for He who has placed everything out of the reach of man, except what he freely gives him, has made it impossible for a reflecting mind that knows this, to indulge so silly a passion for a moment.

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Sept. 11, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I have never seen Doctor Cotton's book, concerning which your sisters question me, nor did I know, till you mentioned it, that he had written anything newer than his Visions; I have no doubt that it is so far worthy of him as to be pious and sensible, and I believe no man living is better

qualified to write on such subjects as his title seems to announce. Some years have passed since I heard from him, and considering his great age it is probable that I shall hear from him no more; but I shall always respect him. He is truly a philosopher, according to my judgment of the character, every tittle of his knowledge in natural subjects being connected in his mind with the firm belief of an Omnipotent agent.

Yours, &c., W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Sept. 18, 1784.

My dear Friend,—Following your good example, I lay before me a sheet of my largest paper. It was this moment fair and unblemished, but I have begun to blot it, and having begun, am not likely to cease till I have spoiled it. I have sent you many a sheet that, in my judgment of it, has been very unworthy of your acceptance, but my conscience was in some measure satisfied by reflecting that, if it were good for nothing, at the same time it cost you nothing, except the trouble of reading it. But the case is altered now.* You must pay a solid price for frothy matter, and though I do not absolutely pick your pocket, yet you lose your money, and, as the saying is, are never the wiser.

My greenhouse is never so pleasant as when we are just upon the point of being turned out of it. The gentleness of the autumnal suns, and the calmness of this latter season, make it a much more agreeable retreat than we ever find it in the summer: when, the winds being generally brisk, we cannot cool it by admitting a sufficient quantity of air, without being at the same time incommoded by it. But now I sit with all the windows and the door wide open, and am regaled with the scent of every flower, in a garden as full of flowers as I have known how to make it. We keep no bees, but if I lived in a hive, I should hardly hear more of their music. All the bees in the neighborhood resort to a bed of mignonette, opposite to the window, and pay me for the honey they get out of it by a hum, which, though rather monotonous, is as agreeable to my ear as the whistling of my linnets. All the sounds that nature utters are delightful, at least in this country. I should not perhaps find the roaring of lions in Africa or of bears in Russia very pleasing, but I know no beast in England whose voice I do not account musical, save and except always the braying of an ass. The notes of all our birds and fowls please me without one exception. I should not indeed think of keeping a goose in a cage, that I might hang him up in the parlor for the sake of his melody, but a goose upon a common or in a farmyard is no bad performer: and as to insects, if the black beetle, and beetles indeed of all hues, will keep out of my way, I have no objection to any of the rest; on the contrary, in whatever key they sing, from the gnat's fine tréble to the bass of the humble bee, I admire them all. Seriously, however, it strikes me as a very observable instance of providential kindness to man, that such an exact accord has been contrived between his ear and the sounds with which, at least in a rural situation, it is almost every moment visited. All the world is sensible of the uncomfortable effect that certain sounds have upon the nerves, and consequently upon the spirits. And if a sinful world had been filled with such as would have curdled the blood, and have made the sense of hearing a perpetual inconvenience, I do not know that we should have had a right to complain. But now the fields, the woods, the gardens, have each their concert, and the ear of man is forever regaled by creatures who seem only to please themselves. Even the ears that are deaf to the Gospel are continually entertained, though without knowing it, by sounds for which they are solely indebted to its Author. There is somewhere in infinite space a world that does not roll within the precincts of mercy, and as it is reasonable, and even scriptural, to suppose that there is music in heaven, in those dismal regions perhaps the reverse of it is found; tones so dismal, as to make woe itself more insupportable, and to acuminate even despair. But my paper admonishes me in good time to draw the reins, and to check the descent of my fancy into deeps with which she is but too familiar.

Our best love attends you both.

Yours, W. C.

* He alludes to the new mode of franking.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 2, 1784.

My dear William,—A poet can but ill spare time for prose. The truth is, I am in haste to finish my transcript, that you may receive it time enough to give it a leisurely reading before you go to town; which, whether I shall be able to accomplish, is at present uncertain. I have the whole punctuation to settle, which in blank verse is of the last importance, and of a species peculiar to that composition; for I know no use of points, unless to direct the voice, the management of which, in the reading of blank verse, being more difficult than in the reading of any other poetry, requires perpetual hints and notices to regulate the inflexions, cadences, and pauses. This however is an affair that, in spite of grammarians, must be left pretty much *ad libitum scriptoris*. For, I suppose,

every author points according to his own reading. If I can send the parcel to the wagon by one o'clock next Wednesday, you will have it on Saturday the ninth. But this is more than I expect. Perhaps I shall not be able to despatch it till the eleventh, in which case it will not reach you till the thirteenth. I the rather think that the latter of these two periods will obtain, because, besides the punctuation, I have the argument of each book to transcribe. Add to this that, in writing for the printer, I am forced to write my best, which makes slow work. The motto of the whole is—

Fit surculus arbor.

If you can put the author's name under it, do so, if not, it must go without one; for I know not to whom to ascribe it. It was a motto taken by a certain prince of Orange, in the year 1733, but not to a poem of his own writing, or indeed to any poem at all, but, as I think, to a medal.

Mr. —— is a Cornish member; but for what place in Cornwall I know not. All I know of him is, that I saw him once clap his two hands upon a rail, meaning to leap over it. But he did not think the attempt a safe one, and therefore took them off again. He was in company with Mr. Throckmorton. With that gentleman we drank chocolate, since I wrote last. The occasion of our visit was, as usual, a balloon. Your mother invited her, and I him, and they promised to return the visit, but have not yet performed. *Tout le monde se trouvoit là*, as you may suppose, among the rest Mrs. W——. She was driven to the door by her son, a boy of seventeen, in a phaeton, drawn by four horses from Lilliput. This is an ambiguous expression, and, should what I write now be legible a thousand years hence, might puzzle commentators. Be it known therefore to the Aldusses and the Stevenses of ages yet to come, that I do not mean to affirm that Mrs. W—— herself came from Lilliput that morning, or indeed that she ever was there, but merely to describe the horses, as being so diminutive, that they might be with propriety said to be Lilliputian.

The privilege of franking having been so cropped, I know not in what manner I and my bookseller are to settle the conveyance of proof sheets hither and back again. They must travel I imagine by coach, a large quantity of them at a time; for, like other authors, I find myself under a poetical necessity of being frugal.

We love you all, jointly and separately, as usual. W. C.

I have not seen, nor shall see, the Dissenter's answer to Mr. Newton, unless you can furnish me with it.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Oct. 9, 1784.

My dear Friend,—The pains you have taken to disengage our correspondence from the expense with which it was threatened, convineing me that my letters, trivial as they are, are yet acceptable to you, encourage me to observe my usual punctuality. You complain of unconnected thoughts. I believe there is not a head in the world but might utter the same complaint, and that all would do so, were they all as attentive to their own vagaries and as honest as yours. The description of your meditations at least suits mine: perhaps I can go a step beyond you, upon the same ground, and assert with the strictest truth that I not only do not think with connexion, but that I frequently do not think at all. I am much mistaken if I do not often catch myself napping in this way; for, when I ask myself, what was the last idea, (as the ushers at Westminster ask an idle boy what was the last word,) I am not able to answer, but, like the boy in question, am obliged to stare and say nothing. This may be a very unphilosophical account of myself, and may clash very much with the general opinion of the learned, that, the soul, being an active principle, and her activity consisting in thought, she must consequently always think. But pardon me, messieurs les philosophes, there are moments when, if I think at all, I am utterly unconscious of doing so, and the thought and the consciousness of it seem to me at least, who am no philosopher, to be inseparable from each other. Perhaps, however, we may both be right; and, if you will grant me that I do not always think, I will in return concede to you the activity you contend for, and will qualify the difference between us by supposing that, though the soul be in herself an active principle, the influence of her present union with a principle that is not such makes her often dormant, suspends her operations, and affects her with a sort of deliquium, in which she suffers a temporary loss of all her functions. I have related to you my experience truly and without disguise; you must therefore either admit my assertion, that the soul does not necessarily always act, or deny that mine is a human soul: a negative, that I am sure you will not easily prove. So much for a dispute which I little thought of being engaged in to-day.

Last night I had a letter from Lord Dartmouth. It was to apprise me of the safe arrival of Cook's last Voyage, which he was so kind as to lend me, in Saint James's Square. The reading of these volumes afforded me much amusement, and I hope some instruction. No observation however forced itself upon me with more violence than one, that I could not help making on the death of Captain Cook. God is a jealous God, and at

Owhyhee the poor man was content to be worshipped. From that moment, the remarkable interposition of Providence in his favor was converted into an opposition that thwarted all his purposes. He left the scene of his deification, but was driven back to it by a most violent storm, in which he suffered more than in any that had preceded it. When he departed, he left his worshippers still infatuated with an idea of his godship, consequently well disposed to serve him. At his return, he found them sullen, distrustful, and mysterious. A trifling theft was committed, which, by a blunder of his own in pursuing the thief after the property had been restored, was magnified to an affair of the last importance. One of their favorite chiefs was killed too by a blunder. Nothing in short but blunder and mistake attended him, till he fell breathless into the water, and then all was smooth again. The world indeed will not take notice or see that the dispensation bore evident marks of divine displeasure: but a mind, I think, in any degree spiritual cannot overlook them. We know from truth itself that the death of Herod was for a similar offence. But Herod was in no sense a believer in God, nor had enjoyed half the opportunities with which our poor countryman had been favored. It may be urged perhaps that he was in jest, that he meant nothing but his own amusement, and that of his companions. I doubt it. He knows little of the heart, who does not know that even in a sensible man it is flattered by every species of exaltation. But be it so, that he was in sport—it was not humane, to say no worse of it, to sport with the ignorance of his friends, to mock their simplicity, to humor and acquiesce in their blind credulity. Besides, though a stock or stone may be worshipped blameless, a baptized man may not. He knows what he does, and, by suffering such honors to be paid him, incurs the guilt of sacrilege.*

We are glad that you are so happy in your church, in your society, and in all your connexions. I have not left myself room to say anything of the love we feel for you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Several of the succeeding letters advert to the poem of "The Task," and cannot fail to inspire interest.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 10, 1784.

My dear William,—I send you four quires of verse, which, having sent, I shall dismiss from my thoughts, and think no more of till I see them in print. I have not after all found time or industry enough to give the last hand to the points. I believe however they are not very erroneous, though, in so long a work, and in a work that requires nicety in this particular, some inaccuracies will escape. Where you find any, you will oblige me by correcting them.

In some passages, especially in the second book, you will observe me very satirical. Writing on such subjects I could not be otherwise. I can write nothing without aiming at least at usefulness. It were beneath my years to do it, and still more dishonorable to my religion. I know that a reformation of such abuses as I have censured is not to be expected from the efforts of a poet; but to contemplate the world, its follies, its vices, its indifference to duty, and its strenuous attachment to what is evil, and not to reprehend, were to approve it. From this charge at least I shall be clear, for I have neither tacitly nor expressly flattered either its characters or its customs. I have paid one and only one compliment, which was so justly due that I did not know how to withhold it, especially having so fair an occasion (I forget myself, there is another in the first book to Mr. Throckmorton,) but the compliment I mean is to Mr. ——. It is however so managed, that nobody but himself can make the application, and you to whom I disclose the secret; a delicacy on my part, which so much delicacy on his obliged me to the observance of!

What there is of a religious cast in the volume, I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons—first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance—and, secondly, that my best impressions might be made last. Were I to write as many volumes as Lopez de Vega, or Voltaire, not one of them would be without this tincture. If the world like it not, so much the worse for them. I make all the concessions I can, that I may please them, but I will not please them at the expense of my conscience.

My descriptions are all from nature; not one of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience; not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural. In my numbers, which I varied as much as I could, (for blank verse without variety of numbers is no better than bladder and string,) I have imitated nobody, though sometimes perhaps there may be an apparent resemblance; because, at the same time that I would not imitate, I have not affectedly differed.

* We subjoin the following note of Hayley on this subject: "Having enjoyed in the year 1772 the pleasure of conversing with this illustrious seaman, on board his own ship, the Resolution, I cannot pass the present letter without observing, that I am persuaded my friend Cowper utterly misapprehended the behavior of Captain Cook in the affair alluded to. From the little personal acquaintance which I had myself with this humane and truly Christian navigator, and from the whole tenor of his life, I cannot believe it possible for him to have acted, under any circumstances, with such impious arrogance as might appear offensive in the eyes of the Almighty."

If the work cannot boast a regular plan, (in which respect however I do not think it altogether indefensible,) it may yet boast that the reflections are naturally suggested always by the preceding passage, and that, except the fifth book, which is rather of a political aspect, the whole has one tendency; to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure, as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue.

If it pleases you I shall be happy, and collect from your pleasure in it an omen of its general acceptance.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 20, 1784.

My dear William,—Your letter has relieved me from some anxiety, and given me a good deal of positive pleasure. I have faith in your judgment, and an implicit confidence in the sincerity of your approbation. The writing of so long a poem is a serious business; and the author must know little of his own heart who does not in some degree suspect himself of partiality to his own production; and who is he that would not be mortified by the discovery that he had written five thousand lines in vain? The poem, however, which you have in hand, will not of itself make a volume so large as the last, or as a bookseller would wish. I say this, because when I had sent Johnson five thousand verses, he applied for a thousand more. Two years since I began a piece which grew to the length of two hundred, and there stopped.* I have lately resumed it, and (I believe) shall finish it. But the subject is fruitful, and will not be comprised in a smaller compass than seven or eight hundred verses. It turns on the question whether an education at school or at home be preferable, and I shall give the preference to the latter. I mean that it shall pursue the track of the former. That is to say, that it shall visit Stock in its way to publication. My design also is to inscribe it to you. But you must see it first; and, if, after seeing it, you should have any objection, though it should be no bigger than the tittle of an i, I will deny myself that pleasure, and find no fault with your refusal. I have not been without thoughts of adding John Gilpin at the tail of all. He has made a good deal of noise in the world, and perhaps it may not be amiss to show that though I write generally with a serious intention, I know how to be occasionally merry. The Critical Reviewers charged me with an attempt at humor. John, having been more celebrated upon the score of humor than most pieces that have appeared in modern days, may serve to exonerate me from the imputation: but in this article I am entirely under your judgment, and mean to be set down by it. All these together will make an octavo like the last. I should have told you, that the piece which now employs me is in rhyme. I do not intend to write any more blank. It is more difficult than rhyme, and not so amusing in the composition. If, when you make the offer of my book to Johnson, he should stroke his chin, and look up to the ceiling, and cry, "Humph!" anticipate him, I beseech you, at once, by saying, "that you know I should be sorry that he should undertake for me to his own disadvantage, or that my volume should be in any degree pressed upon him. I make him the offer merely because I think he would have reason to complain of me if I did not." But, that punctilio once satisfied, it is a matter of indifference to me what publisher sends me forth. If Longman should have difficulties, which is the more probable, as I understand from you that he does not in these cases see with his own eyes, but will consult a brother poet, take no pains to conquer them. The idea of being hawked about, and especially of your being the hawker, is insupportable. Nichols, I have heard, is the most learned printer of the present day. He may be a man of taste as well as learning; and I suppose that you would not want a gentleman usher to introduce you. He prints "The Gentleman's Magazine," and may serve us, if the others should decline: if not, give yourself no farther trouble about the matter. I may possibly envy authors who can afford to publish at their own expense, and in that case should write no more. But the mortification should not break my heart.

I proceed to your corrections, for which I most unaffectedly thank you, adverting to them in their order.

Page 140.—Truth generally without the article *the*, would not be sufficiently defined. There are many sorts of truth, philosophical, mathematical, moral, &c., and a reader not much accustomed to hear of religious or scriptural truth, might possibly and indeed easily doubt what truth was particularly intended. I acknowledge that *grace*, in my use of the word, does not often occur in poetry. So neither does the subject which I handle. Every subject has its own terms, and religious ones take theirs with most propriety from the scripture. Thence I take the word *grace*. The sarcastic use of it in the mouths of infidels I admit, but not their authority to proscribe it, especially as God's favor in the abstract has no other word in all our language by which it can be expressed.

Page 150.—*Impress the mind faintly or not at all.*—I prefer this line, because of the in-

* Tirocinium. See Poems.

terrupted run of it, having always observed that a little unevenness of this sort, in a long work, has a good effect, used, as I mean, sparingly, and with discretion.

Page 127.—This should have been noted first, but was overlooked. Be pleased to alter for me thus, with the difference of only one word, from the alteration proposed by you—

We too are friends to royalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them.

You observed probably, in your second reading, that I allow the life of an animal to be fairly taken away, when it interferes either with the interest or convenience of man. Consequently snails and all reptiles that spoil our crops, either of fruit or grain, may be destroyed, if we can catch them. It gives me real pleasure that Mrs. Unwin so readily understood me. Blank verse, by the unusual arrangement of the words, and by the frequent infusion of one line into another, not less than by the style, which requires a kind of tragical magnificence, cannot be chargeable with much obscurity, must rather be singularly perspicuous, to be so easily comprehended. It is my labor, and my principal one, to be as clear as possible. You do not mistake me, when you suppose that I have great respect for the virtue that flies temptation. It is that sort of prowess, which the whole train of scripture calls upon us to manifest, when assailed by sensual evil. Interior mischiefs must be grappled with. There is no flight from them. But solicitations to sin, that address themselves to our bodily senses, are, I believe, seldom conquered in any other way.

I can easily see that you may have very reasonable objections to my dedicatory proposal. You are a clergyman, and I have hanged your order. You are a child of *alma mater*, and I have banged her too. Lay yourself, therefore, under no constraints that I do not lay you under, but consider yourself as perfectly free.

With our best love to you all, I bid you heartily farewell. I am tired of this endless scribblement. Adieu!

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Oct. 22, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I am now reading a book which you have never read, and will probably never read—Knox's Essays. Perhaps I should premise that I am driven to such reading by the want of books that would please me better, neither having any, nor the means of procuring any. I am not sorry, however, that I have met with him; though, when I have allowed him the praise of being a sensible man, and in *his* way a good one, I have allowed him all that I can afford. Neither his style pleases me, which is sometimes insufferably dry and hard, and sometimes ornamented even to an Harveian tawdriness; nor his manner, which is never lively without being the worse for it; so unhappy is he in his attempts at character and narration. But, writing chiefly on the manners, vices, and follies of the modern day, to me he is at least so far useful, as that he gives me information upon points which I neither *can* nor *would* be informed upon except by hearsay. Of such information, however, I have need, being a writer upon those subjects myself, and a satirical writer too. It is fit, therefore, in order that I may find fault in the right place, that I should know where fault may properly be found. W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Oct. 30, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I accede most readily to the justice of your remarks, on the subject of the truly Roman heroism of the Sandwich islanders. Proofs of such prowess, I believe, are seldom exhibited by a people who have attained to a high degree of civilization. Refinement and profligacy are too nearly allied to admit of anything so noble; and I question whether any instances of faithful friendship, like that which so much affected you in the behavior of the poor savage, were produced even by the Romans themselves in the latter days of the empire. They had been a nation, whose virtues it is impossible not to wonder at. But Greece, which was to them what France is to us, a Pandora's box of mischief, reduced them to her own standard, and they naturally soon sunk still lower. Religion in this case seems pretty much out of the question. To the production of such heroism undebauched nature herself is equal. When Italy was a land of heroes, she knew no more of the true God than her cicisbeos and her fiddlers know now; and indeed it seems a matter of indifference whether a man be born under a truth, which does not influence him, or under the actual influence of a lie; or, if there be any difference between the cases, it seems to be rather in favor of the latter; for a false persuasion, such as the Mahometan, for instance, may animate the courage, and furnish motives for the contempt of death, while despisers of the true religion are punished for their folly, by being abandoned to the last degrees of depravity. Accordingly, we see a Sandwich islander sacrificing himself to his dead friend, and our Christian

seamen and mariners, instead of being impressed by a sense of his generosity, butchering him with a persevering cruelty that will disgrace them forever; for he was a defenceless, unresisting enemy, who meant nothing more than to gratify his love for the deceased. To slay him in such circumstances was to murder him, and with every aggravation of the crime that can be imagined.

I am again at Johnson's, in the shape of a poem in blank verse, consisting of six books and called "The Task." I began it about this time twelvemonth, and writing sometimes an hour in a day, sometimes half a one, and sometimes two hours, have lately finished it. I mentioned it not sooner, because almost to the last I was doubtful whether I should ever bring it to a conclusion, working often in such distress of mind as, while it spurred me to the work, at the same time threatened to disqualify me for it. My bookseller, I suppose, will be as tardy as before. I do not expect to be born into the world till the month of March, when I and the crocuses shall peep together. You may assure yourself that I shall take my first opportunity to wait on you. I mean likewise to gratify myself by obtruding my muse upon Mr. Bacon.

Adieu, my dear friend! We are well, and love you. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 1, 1784.

My dear Friend,—Were I to delay my answer, I must yet write without a frank at last, and may as well therefore write without one now, especially feeling as I do a desire to thank you for your friendly offices so well performed. I am glad, for your sake as well as for my own, that you succeeded in the first instance, and that the first trouble proved the last. I am willing too to consider Johnson's readiness to accept a second volume of mine as an argument that at least he was no loser by the former. I collect from it some reasonable hope that the volume in question may not wrong him either. My imagination tells me (for I know you interest yourself in the success of my productions) that your heart fluttered when you approached Johnson's door, and that it felt itself discharged of a burden when you came out again. You did well to mention it at the T——s: they will now know that you do not pretend to a share in my confidence, whatever be the value of it, greater than you actually possess. I wrote to Mr. Newton by the last post to tell him that I was gone to the press again. He will be surprised and perhaps not pleased. But I think he cannot complain, for he keeps his own authorly secrets without participating them with me. I do not think myself in the least injured by his reserve, neither should I, if he were to publish a whole library without favoring me with any previous notice of his intentions. In these cases it is no violation of the laws of friendship not to communicate, though there must be a friendship where the communication is made. But many reasons may concur in disposing a writer to keep his work secret, and none of them injurious to his friends. The influence of one I have felt myself, for which none of them would blame me—I mean the desire of surprising agreeably. And, if I have denied myself this pleasure in your instance, it was only to give myself a greater, by eradicating from your mind any little weeds of suspicion that might still remain in it, that any man living is nearer to me than yourself. Had not this consideration forced up the lid of my strong-box like a lever, it would have kept its contents with an invisible closeness to the last: and the first news that either you or any of my friends would have heard of "The Task," they would have received from the public papers. But you know now that neither as a poet nor a man do I give to any man a precedence in my estimation at your expense.

I am proceeding with my new work (which at present I feel myself much inclined to call by the name of Tirocinium) as fast as the muse permits. It has reached the length of seven hundred lines, and will probably receive an addition of two or three hundred more. When you see Mr. —— perhaps you will not find it difficult to procure from him half-a-dozen franks, addressed to yourself, and dated the fifteenth of December, in which case they will all go to the post, filled with my lucubrations, on the evening of that day. I do not name an earlier, because I hate to be hurried; and Johnson cannot want it sooner than, thus managed, it will reach him.

I am not sorry that "John Gilpin," though hitherto he has been nobody's child, is likely to be owned at last. Here and there I can give him a touch that I think will mend him; the language in some places not being quite so quaint and old-fashioned as it should be; and in one of the stanzas there is a false rhyme. When I have thus given the finishing stroke to his figure, I mean to grace him with two mottoes, a Greek and a Latin one, which, when the world shall see that I have only a little one of three words to the volume itself, and none to the books of which it consists, they will perhaps understand as a stricture upon that pompous display of literature, with which some authors take occasion to crowd their titles. Knox in particular, who is a sensible man too, has not I

think fewer than half-a-dozen to his "Essays."

Adieu, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Nov., 1784.

My dear Friend,—To condole with you on the death of a mother aged eighty-seven would be absurd—rather therefore, as is reasonable, I congratulate you on the almost singular felicity of having enjoyed the company of so amiable and so near a relation so long. Your lot and mine in this respect have been very different, as indeed in almost every other. Your mother lived to see you rise, at least to see you comfortably established in the world. Mine, dying when I was six years old, did not live to see me sink in it. You may remember with pleasure while you live a blessing vouchsafed to you so long, and I while I live must regret a comfort, of which I was deprived so early. I can truly say that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her. Such was the impression her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for showing it was so short. But the ways of God are equal—and, when I reflect on the pangs she would have suffered had she been a witness of all mine, I see more cause to rejoice than to mourn that she was hidden in the grave so soon.

We have, as you say, lost a lively and sensible neighbor in Lady Austen, but we have been long accustomed to a state of retirement within one degree of solitude, and, being naturally lovers of still life, can relapse into our former duality without being unhappy at the change. To me indeed a third is not necessary, while I can have the companion I have had these twenty years.

I am gone to the press again; a volume of mine will greet your hands some time either in the course of the winter or early in the spring. You will find it perhaps on the whole more entertaining than the former, as it treats a greater variety of subjects, and those, at least the most, of a sublunary kind. It will consist of a poem in six books, called "The Task." To which will be added another, which I finished yesterday, called I believe "Tirocinium," on the subject of education.

You perceive that I have taken your advice, and given the pen no rest.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Nov. 27, 1784.

My dear Friend,—All the interest that you take in my new publication, and all the pleas that you urge in behalf of your right to my confidence, the moment I had read your letter, struck me as so many proofs of your regard; of a friendship in which distance and time make no abatement. But it is difficult to adjust opposite claims to the satisfaction of all parties. I have done my best, and must leave it to your candor to put a just interpretation upon all that has passed, and to give me credit for it as a certain truth that, whatever seeming defects in point of attention and attachment to you my conduct on this occasion may have appeared to have been chargeable with, I am in reality as clear of all real ones as you would wish to find me.

I send you enclosed, in the first place, a copy of the advertisement to the reader, which accounts for my title, not otherwise easily accounted for; secondly, what is called an argument, or a summary of the contents of each book, more circumstantial and diffuse by far than that which I have sent to the press. It will give you a pretty accurate acquaintance with my matter, though the tenons and mortices, by which the several passages are connected, and let into each other, cannot be explained in a syllabus: and lastly, an extract, as you desired. The subject of it I am sure will please you; and, as I have admitted into my description no images but what are scriptural, and have aimed as exactly as I could at the plain and simple sublimity of the scripture language, I have hopes the manner of it may please you too. As far as the numbers and diction are concerned, it may serve pretty well for a sample of the whole. But, the subjects being so various, no single passage can in all respects be a specimen of the book at large.

My principal purpose is to allure the reader, by character, by scenery, by imagery, and such poetical embellishments, to the reading of what may profit him: subordinately to this, to combat that predilection in favor of a metropolis that beggars and exhausts the country, by evacuating it of all its principal inhabitants; and collaterally, and, as far as is consistent with this double intention, to have a stroke at vice, vanity and folly, wherever I find them. I have not spared the Universities. A letter which appeared in the "General Evening Post" of Saturday, said to have been received by a general officer, and by him sent to the press as worthy of public notice, and which has all the appearance of authenticity, would alone justify the severest censures of those bodies, if any such justification were wanted. By way of supplement to what I have written on this subject, I have added a poem, called "Tirocinium," which is in rhyme. It treats of the scandalous relaxation of discipline that obtains in almost all schools universally, but especially in the largest, which are so negligent in the article of morals that boys are de-

bauched in general the moment they are capable of being so. It recommends the office of tutor to the father where there is no real impediment, the expedient of a domestic tutor where there is, and the disposal of boys into the hands of a respectable country clergyman, who limits his attention to two, in all cases where they cannot be conveniently educated at home. Mr. Unwin happily affording me an instance in point, the poem is inscribed to him. You will now I hope command your hunger to be patient, and be satisfied with the luncheon, that I send, till dinner comes. That piecemeal perusal of the work sheet by sheet, would be so disadvantageous to the work itself, and therefore so uncomfortable to me, that (I dare say) you will waive your desire of it. A poem thus disjointed cannot possibly be fit for anybody's inspection but the author's.

Tully's rule—*Nulla dies sine lineâ*—will make a volume in less time than one would suppose. I adhered to it so rigidly that, though more than once I found three lines as many as I had time to compass, still I wrote: and, finding occasionally, and as it might happen a more fluent vein, the abundance of one day made me amends for the barrenness of another. But I do not mean to write blank verse again. Not having the music of rhyme, it requires so close an attention to the pause and the cadence, and such a peculiar mode of expression, as render it, to me at least, the most difficult species of poetry that I have ever meddled with.

I am obliged to you and to Mr. Bacon for your kind remembrance of me when you meet. No artist can excel, as he does, without the finest feelings; and every man that has the finest feelings is and must be amiable.

Adieu, my dear friend!

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, 1784.

My dear William,—The slice which (you observe) has been taken from the top of the sheet, it lost before I began to write; but, being a part of the paper which is seldom used, I thought it would be pity to discard, or to degrade to meaner purposes, the fair and ample remnant, on account of so immaterial a defect. I therefore have destined it to be the vehicle of a letter, which you will accept as entire, though a lawyer perhaps would, without much difficulty, prove it to be but a fragment. The best recompense I can make you for writing without a frank, is to propose it to you to take your revenge by returning an answer under the same predicament; and the best reason I can give for doing it is the occasion following. In my last I recommended it to you to procure franks for the conveyance of "Tirocinium," dated on a day therein mentioned and the earliest which at that time I could venture to appoint. It has happened, however, that the poem is finished a month sooner than I expected, and two thirds of it are at this time fairly transcribed; an accident to which the riders of a Parnassian steed are liable, who never know, before they mount him, at what rate he will choose to travel. If he be indisposed to despatch, it is impossible to accelerate his pace; if otherwise, equally impossible to stop him. Therefore my errand to you at this time is to cancel the former assignation, and to inform you that by whatever means you please, and as soon as you please, the piece in question will be ready to attend you; for, without exerting any extraordinary diligence, I shall have completed the transcript in a week.

The critics will never know that four lines of it were composed while I had a dose of ipecacuanha on my stomach; in short, that I was delivered of the emetic and the verses at the same moment. Knew they this, they would at least allow me to be a poet of singular industry, and confess that I lose no time. I have heard of poets who have found cathartics of sovereign use, when they had occasion to be particularly brilliant. Dryden always used them, and, in commemoration of it, Bayes, in "The Rehearsal," is made to inform the audience, that in a poetical emergency he always had recourse to stewed prunes. But I am the only poet who has dared to reverse the prescription, and whose enterprise, having succeeded to admiration, warrants him to recommend an emetic to all future bards, as the most infallible means of producing a fluent and easy versification.

My love to all your family.

Adieu. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Nov. 29, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I am happy that you are pleased, and accept it as an earnest that I shall not at least disgust the public. For, though I know your partiality to me, I know at the same time with what laudable tenderness you feel for your own reputation, and that, for the sake of that most delicate part of your property, though you would not criticise me with an unfriendly and undue severity, you would however beware of being satisfied too hastily, and with no warrantable cause of being so. I called you the tutor of your two sons, in contemplation of the certainty of that event: it is a fact in suspense, not in fiction.

My principal errand to you now is to give you information on the following subject:—The moment Mr. Newton knew (and I took

care that he should learn it first from me) that I had communicated to you what I had concealed from him, and that you were my authorship's go-between with Johnson on this occasion, he sent me a most friendly letter indeed, but one in every line of which I could hear the soft murmurs of something like mortification, that could not be entirely suppressed. It contained nothing however that you yourself would have blamed, or that I had not every reason to consider as evidence of his regard to me. He concluded the subject with desiring to know something of my plan, to be favored with an extract, by way of specimen, or (which he should like better still) with wishing me to order Johnson to send him a proof as fast as they were printed off. Determining not to accede to this last request for many reasons (but especially because I would no more show my poem piecemeal than I would my house if I had one; the merits of the structure in either case being equally liable to suffer by such a partial view of it), I have endeavored to compromise the difference between us, and to satisfy him without disgracing myself. The proof-sheets I have absolutely, though civilly refused. But I have sent him a copy of the arguments of each book, more dilated and circumstantial than those inserted in the work; and to these I have added an extract, as he desired; selecting, as most suited to his taste, the view of the restoration of all things—which you recollect to have seen near the end of the last book. I hold it necessary to tell you this, lest, if you should call upon him, he should startle you by discovering a degree of information upon the subject which you could not otherwise know how to reconcile or to account for.

You have executed your commissions *à merveille*. We not only approve but admire. No apology was wanting for the balance struck at the bottom, which we accounted rather a beauty than a deformity. Pardon a poor poet, who cannot speak even of pounds, shillings, and pence, but in his own way.

I have read Lunardi with pleasure. He is a lively, sensible young fellow, and I suppose a very favorable sample of the Italians. When I look at his picture, I can fancy that I can see in him that good sense and courage that no doubt were legible in the face of a young Roman two thousand years ago.

Your affectionate W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Dec. 4, 1784.

My dear Friend,—You have my hearty thanks for a very good barrel of oysters; which necessary acknowledgment once made, I might perhaps show more kindness by cutting short an epistle than by continuing one, in which you are not likely to find your account, either in the way of information or amusement. The season of the year indeed is not very friendly to such communications. A damp atmosphere and a sunless sky will have their effect upon the spirits; and when the spirits are checked, farewell to all hope of being good company, either by letter or otherwise. I envy those happy voyagers, who with so much ease ascend to regions unsullied with a cloud, and date their epistles from an extra-mundane situation. No wonder if they outshine us, who poke about in the dark below, in the vivacity of their sallies, as much as they soar above us in their excursions. Not but that I should be very sorry to go to the clouds for wit: on the contrary, I am satisfied that I discover more by continuing where I am. Every man to his business. Their vocation is to see fine prospects, and to make pithy observations upon the world below; such as these, for instance: that the earth, beheld from a height that one trembles to think of, has the appearance of a circular plain; that England is a very rich and cultivated country, in which every man's property is ascertained by the hedges that intersect the lands; and that London and Westminster, seen from the neighborhood of the moon, make but an insignificant figure. I admit the utility of these remarks; but, in the meantime, I say *chacun à son goût;* and mine is rather to creep than fly, and to carry with me, if possible, an unbroken neck to the grave.

I remain, as ever,

Your affectionate W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Dec. 13, 1784.

My dear Friend,—Having imitated no man, I may reasonably hope that I shall not incur the disadvantage of a comparison with my betters. Milton's manner was peculiar. So is Thomson's. He that should write like either of them would in my judgment deserve the name of a copyist, but not a poet. A judicious and sensible reader therefore, like yourself, will not say that my manner is not good, because it does not resemble theirs, but will rather consider what it is in itself. Blank verse is susceptible of a much greater diversification of manner than verse in rhyme: and, why the modern writers of it have all thought proper to cast their numbers alike, I know not. Certainly it was not necessity that compelled them to it. I flatter myself however that I have avoided that sameness with others, which would entitle me to nothing but a share in one common oblivion with them all. It is possible that, as a reviewer of my former volume found cause to

say, that he knew not to what class of writers to refer me, the reviewer of this, whoever he shall be, may see occasion to remark the same singularity. At any rate, though as little apt to be sanguine as most men, and more prone to fear and despond than to overrate my own productions, I am persuaded that I shall not forfeit anything by this volume that I gained by the last. As to the title, I take it to be the best that is to be had. It is not possible that a book including such a variety of subjects, and in which no particular one is predominant, should find a title adapted to them all. In such a case it seemed almost necessary to accommodate the name to the incident that gave birth to the poem; nor does it appear to me that, because I performed more than my task, therefore "The Task" is not a suitable title. A house would still be a house, though the builder of it should make it ten times as big as he at first intended. I might indeed, following the example of the Sunday newsmonger, call it the Olio. But I should do myself wrong: for, though it have much variety, it has I trust no confusion.

For the same reason none of the inferior titles apply themselves to the contents at large of that book to which they belong. They are, every one of them, taken either from the leading (I should say the introductory) passage of that particular book, or from that which makes the most conspicuous figure in it. Had I set off with a design to write upon a gridiron, and had I actually written near two hundred lines upon that utensil, as I have upon the Sofa, the gridiron should have been my title. But the Sofa being, as I may say, the starting-post, from which I addressed myself to the long race that I soon conceived a design to run, it acquired a just pre-eminence in my account, and was very worthily advanced to the titular honor it enjoys, its right being at least so far a good one, that no word in the language could pretend a better.

The Time-piece appears to me (though by some accident the import of that title has escaped you) to have a degree of propriety beyond the most of them. The book to which it belongs is intended to strike the hour that gives notice of the approaching judgment; and, dealing pretty largely in the signs of the times, seems to be denominated, as it is, with a sufficient degree of accommodation to the subject.

As to the word *worm*, it is the very appellation which Milton himself, in a certain passage of the Paradise Lost, gives to the serpent. Not having the book at hand, I cannot now refer to it, but I am sure of the fact. I am mistaken, too, if Shakspeare's Cleopatra do not call the asp by which she thought fit to destroy herself by the same name: but, not having read the play these five-and-twenty years, I will not affirm it. They are however, without all doubt, convertible terms. A worm is a small serpent, and a serpent is a large worm. And when an epithet significant of the most terrible species of those creatures is adjoined, the idea is surely sufficiently ascertained. No animal of the vermicular or serpentine kind is crested but the most formidable of all.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

The passages alluded to by Cowper are as follows:

O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false *worm*, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice; &c.
Paradise Lost, book 9

Hast thou the pretty *worm* of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?
SHAKSPEARE'S *Anthony & Cleopatra*, Act 5.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Dec. 18, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I condole with you that you had the trouble to ascend St. Paul's in vain, but at the same time congratulate you that you escaped an ague. I should be very well pleased to have a fair prospect of a balloon under sail, with a philosopher or two on board, but at the same time should be very sorry to expose myself, for any length of time, to the rigor of the upper regions at this season for the sake of it. The travellers themselves, I suppose, are secured from all injuries of the weather by that ferveney of spirit and agitation of mind which must needs accompany them in their flight; advantages which the more composed and phlegmatic spectator is not equally possessed of.

The inscription of the poem is more your own affair than any other person's. You have therefore an undoubted right to fashion it to your mind, nor have I the least objection to the slight alteration that you have made in it. I inserted what you have erased for a reason that was perhaps rather chimerical than solid. I feared however that the reviewers, or some of my sagacious readers not more merciful than they, might suspect that there was a secret design in the wind, and that author and friend had consulted in what manner author might introduce friend to public notice as a clergyman every way qualified to entertain a pupil or two, if peradventure any gentleman of fortune were in want of a tutor for his children: I therefore added the words "And of his two sons only," by way of insinuating that you are perfectly satisfied with your present charge, and that you do not wish for more; thus meaning to obviate an illiberal construction which we are both of us incapa-

ble of deserving. But, the same caution not having appeared to you to be necessary, I am very willing and ready to suppose that it is not so.

I intended in my last to have given you my reasons for the compliment that I paid Bishop Bagot, lest, knowing that I have no personal connexion with him, you should suspect me of having done it rather too much at a venture.* In the first place, then, I wished the world to know that I have no objection to a bishop, *quia* bishop. In the second place, the brothers were all five my schoolfellows, and very amiable and valuable boys they were. Thirdly, Lewis, the bishop, had been rudely and coarsely treated in the Monthly Review, on account of a sermon which appeared to me, when I read their extract from it, to deserve the highest commendations, as exhibiting explicit proof both of his good sense and his unfeigned piety. For these causes, me thereunto moving, I felt myself happy in an opportunity to do public honor to a worthy man who had been publicly traduced; and indeed the reviewers themselves have since repented of their aspersions, and have travelled not a little out of their way in order to retract them, having taken occasion, by the sermon preached at the bishop's visitation at Norwich, to say everything handsome of his lordship, who, whatever might be the merit of the discourse, in that instance, at least, could himself lay claim to no other than that of being a hearer.

Since I wrote, I have had a letter from Mr. Newton that did not please me, and returned an answer to it that possibly may not have pleased him. We shall come together again soon (I suppose) upon as amicable terms as usual: but at present he is in a state of mortification. He would have been pleased had the book passed out of his hands into yours, or even out of yours into his, so that he had previously had opportunity to advise a measure which I pursued without his recommendation, and had seen the poems in manuscript. But my design was to pay you a whole compliment, and I have done it. If he says more on the subject, I shall speak freely, and perhaps please him less than I have done already.

Yours, with our love to you all,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Christmas-eve, 1784.

My dear Friend,—I am neither Mede nor Persian, neither am I the son of any such, but was born at Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, and yet I can neither find a new title for my book, nor please myself with any addition to the old one. I am, however, willing to hope, that when the volume shall cast itself at your feet, you will be in some measure reconciled to the name it bears, especially when you shall find it justified both by the exordium of the poem and by the conclusion. But enough, as you say with great truth, of a subject very unworthy of so much consideration.

Had I heard any anecdotes of poor dying ——, that would have bid fair to deserve your attention, I should have sent them. The little that he is reported to have uttered, of a spiritual import, was not very striking. That little, however, I can give you upon good authority. His brother, asking him how he found himself, he replied, "I am composed, and think that I may safely believe myself entitled to a portion." The world has had much to say in his praise, and both prose and verse have been employed to celebrate him in "The Northampton Mercury." But Christians, I suppose, have judged it best to be silent. If he ever drank at the fountain of life, he certainly drank also, and often too freely, of certain other streams, which are not to be bought without money and without price. He had virtues that dazzled the natural eye, and failings that shocked the spiritual one. But *iste dies indicabit.*

W. C.

In reviewing the events in Cowper's Life, recorded in the present volume, our remarks must be brief. His personal history continues to present the same afflicting spectacle of a man always struggling under the pressure of a load from which no effort, either on his own part, or on that of others, is able to extricate him. We know nothing more touching than some of the letters in the private correspondence in reference to this subject; and we consider them indispensable to a clear elucidation of the state of his mind and feelings. Their deep pathos, their ingenuous disclosure of all that he feels, and still more, of all that he dreads; the delusion under which the mind evidently labors, and yet the fixed and unalterable integrity of principle that reigns within, form a sublime scene, that awakens sympathy and commands admiration.

That under circumstances of such deep trial, the powers of his mind should remain free and unimpaired; that he should be able to produce a work like "The Task," destined to survive so long as taste, truth, and nature shall exercise their empire over the heart, is not only a phenomenon in the history of the human mind, but serves to show that the greatest calamities are not without their alleviation; that God knows how to temper the wind to the shorn lamb, and that the bush may be on fire without being consumed.

It is by dispensations such as these that the

* Tirocinium.

Moral Governor of the world admonishes and instructs us: and that we learn to adore his wisdom and overruling power and love. We also see the value of mental resources, and that literature, and art, and science, when consecrated to the highest ends, not only ennoble our existence, but are a solace under its heaviest cares and disquietudes. It was this divine philosophy, so richly poured over the pages of the Task, that strengthened and sustained the mind of Cowper. The Muse was his delight and refuge, but it was the Muse clad in the panoply of heaven, and soaring to the heights of Zion. He taught the school of poets a sublime moral lesson, not to debase a noble art by ministering to the corrupt passions of our nature, but to make it the vehicle of pure and elevated thought, the honorable ally of virtue, and the handmaid of true religion: that it is not sufficient to captivate the taste, and to lead through the regions of poetic fancy:—

"The still small voice is wanted."

It is this characteristic feature that constitutes the charm of Cowper's poetry, and his title to immortality. He approached the temple of fame through the vestibule of the sanctuary, and snatched the live coal from the burning altar. It is his object to reprove vice, to vindicate truth from error, to endear home, by making it the scene of our virtues, and the source of our joys, to enlarge the bounds of simple and harmless pleasure, to exhibit nature in all its attractive forms, and to trace God in the works of his Providence, and in the mighty dispensation of his Grace.

The completion of the second volume of Cowper's poems formed an important period in his literary history. It was the era of the establishment of his poetical fame. His first volume had already laid the foundation: the second raised the superstructure, which has secured for him a reputation as honorable as it is likely to be lasting. He was more particularly indebted for this distinction to his inimitable production, "The Task," a work which every succeeding year has increasingly stamped with the seal of public approbation. If we inquire into the causes of its celebrity, they are to be found not merely in the multitude of poetical beauties, scattered throughout the poem: it is the faithful delineation of nature, and of the scenes of real life; it is the vein of pure and elevated morality, the exquisite sensibility of feeling, and the powerful appeals to the heart and conscience, which constitute its great charm and interest. The court, the town, and the country, all united in its praise, because conscience and nature never suffer their rights to be extinguished, except in minds the most perverted or depraved. These rights are coeval with our birth: they grow with our growth, and yield only to that universal decree, which levels taste, perception, and every moral feeling with the dust; and which will finally dissolve the whole system of created nature, and merge time itself into eternity.

Cowper's second volume, containing his "Task," and "Tirocinium," to which some smaller pieces were afterwards attached, was ready for the press in November, 1784,* though its publication was delayed till June, 1785. The close of a literary undertaking is always contemplated as an event of great interest to the feelings of an author. It is the termination of his labors and the commencement of his hopes and fears. Gibbon the historian has thought proper to record the precise hour and day, in which he concluded his laborious work, of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," with feelings of a mingled and impressive character.

"I have presumed," he says, "to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian might be short and precarious."†

These chastened feelings are implanted by a Divine Power, to check the pride and exultation of genius, and to maintain the mind in lowly humility. Nor is Pope's reflection less just and affecting: "The morning after my exit," he observes, "the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, and people laugh and marry as they were used to do."‡

What then is the moral that is conveyed? If life be so evanescent, if its toils and labors, its sorrows and joys, so quickly pass away, it becomes us to leave some memorial behind,

* See p. 166.

† See Life and Writings of Edward Gibbon, p. 30, prefixed to his "Decline and Fall," &c.

‡ See Pope's Letters.

that we have not lived unprofitably either to others or to ourselves; to keep the mind free from prejudice, the heart from passion, and the life from error; to enlighten the ignorant, to raise the fallen, and to comfort the depressed; to scatter around us the endearments of kindness, and diffuse a spirit of righteousness, of benevolence, and of truth; to enjoy the sunshine of an approving conscience, and the blessedness of inward joy and peace; that thus, when the closing scene shall at length arrive, the ebbings of the dissolving frame may be sustained by the triumph of Christian hope, and death prove the portal of immortality.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Jan. 5, 1785.

I have observed, and you must have had occasion to observe it oftener than I, that when a man who once seemed to be a Christian has put off that character and resumed his old one, he loses, together with the grace which he seemed to possess, the most amiable part of the character that he resumes. The best features of his natural face seem to be struck out, that after having worn religion only as a handsome mask he may make a more disgusting appearance than he did before he assumed it.

According to your request, I subjoin my epitaph on Dr. Johnson; at least I mean to do it, if a drum, which at this moment announces the arrival of a giant in the town, will give me leave.

Yours, W. C.

EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON.

Here Johnson lies—a sage, by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from Heaven possess'd,
And faith at last—alone worth all the rest.
O man immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth, by glory in the skies!

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan. 15, 1785.

My dear William,—Your letters are always welcome. You can always either find something to say, or can amuse me and yourself with a sociable and friendly way of saying nothing. I never found that a letter was the more easily written, because the writing of it had been long delayed. On the contrary, experience has tanght me to answer soon, that I may do it without difficulty. It is in vain to wait for an accumulation of materials in a situation such as yours and mine, productive of few events. At the end of our expectations we shall find ourselves as poor as at the beginning.

I can hardly tell you with any certainty of information, upon what terms Mr. Newton and I may be supposed to stand at present. A month (I believe) has passed since I heard from him. But my *friseur*, having been in London in the course of this week, whence he returned last night, and having called at Hoxton, brought me his love and an excuse for his silence, which, he said, had been occasioned by the frequency of his preachings at this season. He was not pleased that my manuscript was not first transmitted to him, and I have cause to suspect that he was even mortified at being informed that a certain inscribed poem was not inscribed to himself But we shall jumble together again, as people that have an affection for each other at bottom, notwithstanding now and then a slight disagreement, always do.

I know not whether Mr. —— has acted in consequence of your hint, or whether, not needing one, he transmitted to us his bounty before he had received it. He has however send us a note for twenty pounds: with which we have performed wonders in behalf of the ragged and the starved. He is a most extraordinary young man, and, though I shall probably never see him, will always have a niche in the museum of my reverential remembrance.

The death of Dr. Johnson has set a thousand scribblers to work, and me among the rest. While I lay in bed, waiting till I could reasonably hope that the parlor might be ready for me, I invoked the Muse and composed the following epitaph.*

It is destined, I believe, to the "Gentleman's Magazine," which I consider as a respectable repository for small matters, which, when entrusted to a newspaper, can expect but the duration of a day. But, Nichols having at present a small piece of mine in his hands, not yet printed, (it is called the Poplar Field, and I suppose you have it,) I wait till his obstetrical aid has brought that to light, before I send him a new one. In his last he published my epitaph upon Tiney;† which, I likewise imagine, has been long in your collection.

Not a word yet from Johnson: I am easy however upon the subject, being assured that, so long as his own interest is at stake, he will not want a monitor to remind him of the proper time to publish.

* Private correspondence.

* The same which has been inserted in the preceding letter.

† One of Cowper's favorite hares:

"Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow," &c.

See Poems.

You and your family have our sincere love. Forget not to present my respectful compliments to Miss Unwin, and, if you have not done it already, thank her on my part for the very agreeable narrative of Lunardi. He is a young man, I presume, of great good sense and spirit, (his letters at least and his enterprising turn bespeak him such,) a man qualified to shine not only among the stars,* but in the more useful though humbler sphere of terrestrial occupation.

I have been crossing the channel in a balloon, ever since I read of that achievement by Blanchard.† I have an insatiable thirst to know the philosophical reason why his vehicle had like to have fallen into the sea, when, for aught that appears, the gas was not at all exhausted. Did not the extreme cold condense the inflammable air, and cause the globe to collapse? Tell me, and be my Apollo forever.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

The incident connected with the Poplar Field, mentioned in the former part of the above letter, is recorded in the verses. The place where the poplars grew is called Lavendon Mills, about a mile from Olney; it was one of Cowper's favorite walks. After a long absence, on revisiting the spot, he found the greater part of his beloved trees lying prostrate on the ground. Four only survived, and they have recently shared the same fate. But poetry can dignify the minutest events, and convert the ardor of hope or the pang of disappointment into an occasion for pouring forth the sweet melody of song. It is to the above incident that we are indebted for the following verses, which unite the charm of simple imagery with a beautiful and affecting moral at the close.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

The poplars are felled, farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed, since I last took a view
Of my favorite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before,
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are hasting away
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

The change both my heart and my fancy employs;
I reflect on the frailty of man and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

* Lunardi's name is associated with the aëronauts of that time.

† Blanchard, accompanied by Dr. Jeffries, took his departure for Calais from the castle at Dover. When within five or six miles of the French coast, the balloon fell rapidly towards the sea, and, had it not been lightened and a breeze sprung up, they must have perished in the waves.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Jan. 22, 1785.

My dear Friend,—The departure of the long frost, by which we were pinched and squeezed together for three weeks, is a most agreeable circumstance. The weather is now (to speak poetically) genial and jocund; and the appearance of the sun, after an eclipse, peculiarly welcome. For, were it not that I have a gravel walk about sixty yards long, where I take my daily exercise, I should be obliged to look at a fine day through the window, without any other enjoyment of it; a country rendered impassable by frost, that has been at last resolved into rottenness, keeps me so close a prisoner. Long live the inventors and improvers of balloons! It is always clear overhead, and by and by we shall use no other road.

How will the Parliament employ themselves when they meet?—to any purpose, or to none, or only to a bad one? They are utterly out of my favor. I despair of them altogether. Will they pass an act for the cultivation of the royal wilderness? Will they make an effectual provision for a northern fishery? Will they establish a new sinking fund that shall infallibly pay off the national debt? I say nothing about a more equal representation,† because, unless they bestow upon private gentlemen of no property the privilege of voting, I stand no chance of ever being represented myself. Will they achieve all these wonders or none of them? And shall I derive no other advantage from the great Wittena-Gemot of the nation, than merely to read their debates, for twenty folios of which I would not give one farthing!

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Feb. 7, 1785.

My dear Friend,—We live in a state of

* Private correspondence.

† Mr. Pitt had introduced, at this time, his celebrated bill for effecting a reform in the national representation; the leading feature of which was to transfer the elective franchise from the smaller and decayed boroughs to the larger towns. The proposition was, however, rejected by a considerable majority.

such uninterrupted retirement, in which incidents worthy to be recorded occur so seldom, that I always sit down to write with a discouraging conviction that I have nothing to say. The event commonly justifies the presage. For, when I have filled my sheet, I find that I have said nothing. Be it known to you, however, that I may now at least communicate a piece of intelligence to which you will not be altogether indifferent; that I have received and returned to Johnson the two first proof-sheets of my new publication. The business was despatched indeed a fortnight ago, since when I have heard from him no further. From such a beginning, however, I venture to prognosticate the progress, and in due time the conclusion of the matter.

In the last Gentleman's Magazine my Poplar Field appears. I have accordingly sent up two pieces more, a Latin translation of it, which you have never seen, and another on a rose-bud, the neck of which I inadvertently broke, which whether you have seen or not I know not. As fast as Nichols prints off the poems I send him, I send him new ones. My remittance usually consists of two; and he publishes one of them at a time. I may indeed furnish him at this rate, without putting myself to any great inconvenience. For my last supply was transmitted to him in August, and is but now exhausted.

I communicate the following at your mother's instance, who will suffer no part of my praise to be sunk in oblivion. A certain lord has hired a house at Clifton, in our neighborhood, for a hunting seat.* There he lives at present with his wife and daughter. They are an exemplary family in some respects, and (I believe) an amiable one in all. The Reverend Mr. Jones, the curate of that parish, who often dines with them by invitation on a Sunday, recommended my volume to their reading; and his lordship, after having perused a part of it, expressed an ardent desire to be acquainted with the author, from motives which my great modesty will not suffer me to particularize. Mr. Jones, however, like a wise man, informed his lordship that, for certain special reasons and causes, I had declined going into company for many years, and that therefore he must not hope for my acquaintance. His lordship most civilly subjoined that he was sorry for it. "And is that all?" say you. Now were I to hear you say so, I should look foolish and say, "Yes." But, having you at a distance, I snap my fingers at you and say, "No that is not all." Mr. ———, who favors us now and then with his company in an evening as usual, was not long since discoursing with that eloquence which is so peculiar to himself, on the many providential interpositions that had taken place in his favor. "He had wished for many things," he said, "which, at the time when he formed these wishes, seemed distant and improbable, some of them indeed impossible. Among other wishes that he had indulged, one was that he might be connected with men of genius and ability—and, in my connexion with this worthy gentleman," said he, turning to me, "that wish, I am sure, is amply gratified." You may suppose that I felt the sweat gush out upon my forehead when I heard this speech; and if you do, you will not be at all mistaken. So much was I delighted with the delicacy of that incense.

Thus far I proceeded easily enough; and here I laid down my pen, and spent some minutes in recollection, endeavoring to find some subject with which I might fill the little blank that remains. But none presents itself. Farewell therefore, and remember those who are mindful of you!

Present our love to all your comfortable fireside, and believe me ever most affectionately yours, W. C.

* Lord Peterborough.

They that read Greek with the accents, would pronounce the ε in φιλεω as an η. But I do not hold with that practice, though educated in it. I should therefore utter it just as I do the Latin word *filio*, taking the quantity for my guide.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Feb. 19, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I am obliged to you for apprising me of the various occasions of delay to which your letters are liable. Furnished with such a key, I shall be able to account for any accidental tardiness, without supposing anything worse than that you yourself have been interrupted, or that your messenger has not been punctual.

Mr. Teedon has just left us.† He came to exhibit to us a specimen of his kinsman's skill in the art of book-binding. The book on which he had exercised his ingenuity was your life. You did not indeed make a very splendid appearance; but, considering that you were dressed by an untaught artificer, and that it was his first attempt, you had no cause to be dissatisfied. The young man has evidently the possession of talents, by which he might shine for the benefit of others and for his own, did not his situation smother him. He can make a dulcimer, tune it, play upon it, and with common advantages would undoubtedly have been able to make a harpsicord. But unfortunately he lives where neither the one nor the other is at all in vogue. He can convert the shell of a cocoa-nut into a decent drinking-cup; but, when he

* Private correspondence.

† He was an intelligent schoolmaster at Olney.

has done, he must either fill it at the pump, or use it merely as an ornament of his own mantel-tree. In like manner, he can bind a book; but, if he would have books to bind, he must either make them or buy them, for we have few or no literati at Olney. Some men have talents with which they do mischief; and others have talents with which if they do no mischief to others, at least they can do but little good to themselves. They are however always a blessing, unless by our own folly we make them a curse; for, if we cannot turn them to a lucrative account, they may however furnish us, at many a dull season, with the means of innocent amusement. Such is the use that Mr. Killingworth makes of his; and this evening we have, I think, made him happy, having furnished him with two octavo volumes, in which the principles and practise of all ingenious arts are inculcated and explained. I make little doubt that, by the help of them, he will in time be able to perform many feats, for which he will never be one farthing the richer, but by which nevertheless himself and his kin will be much diverted.

The winter returning upon us at this late season with redoubled severity is an event unpleasant even to us who are well furnished with fuel, and seldom feel much of it, unless when we step into bed or get out of it; but how much more formidable to the poor! When ministers talk of resources, that word never fails to send my imagination into the mud-wall cottages of our poor at Olney. There I find assembled in one individual the miseries of age, sickness, and the extremest penury. We have many such instances around us. The parish perhaps allows such a one a shilling a week; but, being numbed with cold and crippled by disease, she cannot possibly earn herself another. Such persons therefore suffer all that famine can inflict upon them, only that they are not actually starved; a catastrophe which so many of them I suppose would prove a happy release. One cause of all this misery is the exorbitant taxation with which the country is encumbered, so that to the poor the few pence they are able to procure have almost lost their value. Yet the budget will be opened soon, and soon we shall hear of resources. But I could conduct the statesman who rolls down to the House in a chariot as splendid as that of Pheton into scenes that, if he had any sensibility for the woes of others, would make him tremble at the mention of the word.—This, however, is not what I intended when I began this paragraph. I was going to observe that, of all the winters we have passed at Olney, and this is the seventeenth, the present has confined us most. Thrice, and but thrice, since the middle of October, have we escaped into the fields for a little fresh air and a little change of motion. The last time indeed it was at some peril that we did it, Mrs. Unwin having slipped into a ditch, and, though I performed the part of an active 'squire upon the occasion, escaped out of it upon her hands and knees.

If the town afford any other news than I here send you, it has not reached me yet. I am in perfect health, at least of body, and Mrs. Unwin is tolerably well. Adieu! We remember you always, you and yours, with as much affection as you can desire; which being said, and said truly, leaves me quite at a loss for any other conclusion than that of

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Feb. 27, 1783

My dear Friend,—I write merely to inquire after your health, and with a sincere desire to hear that you are better. Horace somewhere advises his friend to give his client the slip, and come and spend the evening with him. I am not so inconsiderate as to recommend the same measure to you, because we are not such very near neighbors as a trip of that sort requires that we should be. But I do verily wish that you would favor me with just five minutes of the time that properly belongs to your clients, and place it to my account. Employ it, I mean, in telling me that you are better at least, if not recovered.

I have been pretty much indisposed myself since I wrote last; but except in point of strength am now as well as before. My disorder was what is commonly called and best understood by the name of a thorough cold; which being interpreted, no doubt you well know, signifies shiverings, aches, burnings, lassitude, together with many other ills that flesh is heir to. James's powder is my nostrum on all such occasions, and never fails.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

The next letter discovers the playful and sportive wit of Cowper.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, March 19, 1785.

My dear Friend,—You will wonder no doubt when I tell you that I write upon a card-table; and will be still more surprised when I add that we breakfast, dine, sup, upon a card-table. In short, it serves all purposes, except the only one for which it was originally designed. The solution of this mystery shall follow, lest it should run in your head at a wrong time, and should puzzle you perhaps when you are on the point of ascending your pulpit: for I have

* Private correspondence.

heard you say that at such seasons your mind is often troubled with impertinent intrusions. The round table which we formerly had in use was unequal to the pressure of my superincumbent breast and elbows. When I wrote upon it, it creaked and tilted, and by a variety of inconvenient tricks disturbed the process. The fly-table was too slight and too small; the square dining-table too heavy and too large, occupying, when its leaves were spread, almost the whole parlor; and the sideboard-table, having its station at too great a distance from the fire, and not being easily shifted out of its place and into it again, by reason of its size, was equally unfit for my purpose. The card-table, therefore, which had for sixteen years been banished as mere lumber; the card-table, which is covered with green baize, and is therefore preferable to any other that has a slippery surface; the card-table, that stands firm and never totters,—is advanced to the honor of assisting me upon my scribbling occasions, and, because we choose to avoid the trouble of making frequent changes in the position of our household furniture, proves equally serviceable upon all others. It has cost us now and then the downfall of a glass: for, when covered with a table-cloth, the fish-ponds are not easily discerned; and, not being seen, are sometimes as little thought of. But, having numerous good qualities which abundantly compensate that single inconvenience, we spill upon it our coffee, our wine, and our ale, without murmuring, and resolve that it shall be our table still to the exclusion of all others. Not to be tedious, I will add but one more circumstance upon the subject, and that only because it will impress upon you, as much as anything that I have said, a sense of the value we set upon its escritorial capacity. Parched and penetrated on one side by the heat of the fire, it has opened into a large fissure, which pervades not the moulding of it only, but the very substance of the plank. At the mouth of this aperture a sharp splinter presents itself, which, as sure as it comes in contact with a gown or an apron, tears it. It happens unfortunately to be on that side of this excellent and never-to-be-forgotton table which Mrs. Unwin sweeps with her apparel, almost as often as she rises from her chair. The consequences need not, to use the fashionable phrase, be given in detail: but the needle sets all to rights; and the card-table still holds possession of its functions without a rival.

Clean roads and milder weather have once more released us, opening a way for our escape into our accustomed walks. We have both I believe been sufferers by such a long confinement. Mrs. Unwin has had a nervous fever all the winter, and I a stomach that has quarrelled with everything, and not seldom even with its bread and butter. Her complaint I hope is at length removed; but mine seems more obstinate, giving way to nothing that I can oppose to it, except just in the moment when the opposition is made. I ascribe this malady—both our maladies, indeed—in a great measure to our want of exercise. We have each of us practised more in other days than lately we have been able to take; and, for my own part, till I was more than thirty years old, it was almost essential to my comfort to be perpetually in motion. My constitution therefore misses, I doubt not, its usual aids of this kind; and, unless for purposes which I cannot foresee, Providence should interpose to prevent it, will probably reach the moment of its dissolution the sooner for being so little disturbed. A vitiated digestion I believe always terminates, if not cured, in the production of some chronical disorder. In several I have known it produce a dropsy. But no matter. Death is inevitable; and whether we die to-day or to-morrow, a watery death or a dry one, is of no consequence. The state of our spiritual health is all. Could I discover a few more symptoms of convalescence there, this body might moulder into its original dust, without one sigh from me. Nothing of all this did I mean to say; but I have said it, and must now seek another subject.

One of our most favorite walks is spoiled. The spinney is cut down to the stumps—even the lilacs and the syringas, to the stumps. Little did I think, (though indeed I might have thought it,) that the trees which screened me from the sun last summer would this winter be employed in roasting potatoes and boiling tea-kettles for the poor of Olney. But so it has proved; and we ourselves have at this moment more than two wagon-loads of them in our wood-loft.

Such various services can trees perform;
Whom once they screen'd from heat, in time they warm.

A letter from Manchester reached our town last Sunday, addressed to the mayor or other chief magistrate of Olney. The purport of it was to excite him and his neighbors to petition Parliament against the concessions to Ireland that Government has in contemplation. Mr. Maurice Smith, as constable, took the letter. But whether that most respectable personage amongst us intends to comply with the terms of it, or not, I am ignorant. For myself, however, I can pretty well answer, that I shall sign no petition of the sort; both because I do not think myself competent to a right understanding of the question, and because it appears to me that, whatever be the event, no place in England can be less concerned in it than Olney.

We rejoice that you are all well. Our love attends Mrs. Newton and yourself, and the young ladies.

I am yours, my dear friend, as usual,
W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, March 20, 1785.

My dear William,—I thank you for your letter. It made me laugh, and there are not many things capable of being contained within the dimensions of a letter for which I see cause to be more thankful. I was pleased too to see my opinion of his lordship's *nonchalance*, upon a subject that you had so much at heart, completely verified. I do not know that the eye of a nobleman was ever dissected. I cannot help supposing, however, that were that organ, as it exists in the head of such a personage, to be accurately examined, it would be found to differ materially in its construction from the eye of a commoner; so very different is the view that men in an elevated and in an humble station have of the same object. What appears great, sublime, beautiful, and important to you and to me, when submitted to my lord or his grace, and submitted too with the utmost humility, is either too minute to be visible at all, or, if seen, seems trivial and of no account. My supposition therefore seems not altogether chimerical.

In two months I have corrected proof-sheets to the amount of ninety-three pages, and no more. In other words, I have received three packets. Nothing is quick enough for impatience, and I suppose that the impatience of an author has the quickest of all possible movements. It appears to me, however, that at this rate we shall not publish till next autumn. Should you happen therefore to pass Johnson's door, pop in your head as you go, and just insinuate to him that, were his remittances rather more frequent, that frequency would be no inconvenience to me. I much expected one this evening, a fortnight having now elapsed since the arrival of the last. But none came, and I felt myself a little mortified. I took up the newspaper, however, and read it. There I found that the emperor and the Dutch are, after all their negotiations, going to war. Such reflections as these struck me. A great part of Europe is going to be involved in the greatest of all calamities: troops are in motion—artillery is drawn together—cabinets are busied in contriving schemes of blood and devastation—thousands will perish who are incapable of understanding the dispute, and thousands who, whatever the event may be, are little more interested in it than myself, will suffer unspeakable hardships in the course of the quarrel.—Well! Mr. Poet, and how then? You have composed certain verses, which you are desirous to see in print, and, because the impression seems to be delayed, you are displeased, not to say dispirited. Be ashamed of yourself! you live in a world in which your feelings may find worthier subjects—be concerned for the havoc of nations, and mourn over your retarded volume when you find a dearth of more important tragedies!

You postpone certain topics of conference to our next meeting. When shall it take place? I do not wish for you just now, because the garden is a wilderness, and so is all the country around us. In May we shall have 'sparagus, and weather in which we may stroll to Weston; at least we may hope for it; therefore come in May: you will find us happy to receive you and as much of your fair household as you can bring with you.

We are very sorry for your uncle's indisposition. The approach of summer seems however to be in his favor, that season being of all remedies for the rheumatism, I believe, the most effectual.

I thank you for your intelligence concerning the celebrity of John Gilpin. You may be sure that it was agreeable; but your own feelings, on occasion of that article, pleased me most of all. Well, my friend, be comforted! You had not an opportunity of saying publicly, "I know the author." But the author himself will say as much for you soon, and perhaps will feel in doing so a gratification equal to your own.*

In the affair of face-painting, I am precisely of your opinion.

Adieu. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, April 9, 1785.

My dear Friend,—In a letter to the printer of the Northampton Mercury, we have the following history:—An ecclesiastic of the name of Zichen, German superintendent or Lutheran bishop of Zetterfeldt, in the year 1779 delivered to the courts of Hanover and Brunswick a prediction to the following purport: that an earthquake is at hand, the greatest and most destructive ever known; that it will originate in the Alps and in their neighborhood, especially at Mount St. Gothard; at the foot of which mountain it seems four rivers have their source, of which the Rhine is one‡—the names of the rest I have forgotten—they are all to be swallowed up;

* He alludes to the poem of "Tirocinium," which was inscribed to Mr. Unwin.

† Private correspondence.

‡ This is a geographical error. The Rhine takes its rise in the canton of the Grisons. It is the Rhone which derives its source from the western flank of Mount St. Gothard, where there are three springs, which unite their waters to that torrent. The river Aar rises not far distant, but there is no other river.—Ed.

that the earth will open into an immense fissure, which will divide all Europe, reaching from the aforesaid mountain to the states of Holland; that the Zuyder Sea will be absorbed in the gulf; that the Bristol Channel will be no more; in short, that the north of Europe will be separated from the south, and that seven thousand cities, towns, and villages will be destroyed. This prediction he delivered at the aforesaid courts in the year seventy-nine, asserting that in February following the commotion would begin, and that by Easter 1786 the whole would be accomplished. Accordingly, between the 15th and 27th of February, in the year eighty, the public gazettes and newspapers took notice of several earthquakes in the Alps, and in the regions at their foot; particularly about Mount St. Gothard. From this partial fulfilment, Mr. O—— argues the probability of a complete one, and exhorts the world to watch and be prepared. He adds moreover that Mr. Zichen was a pious man, a man of science, and a man of sense; and that when he gave in his writing he offered to swear to it—I suppose, as a revelation from above. He is since dead.

Nothing in the whole affair pleases me so much as that he has named a short day for the completion of his prophecy. It is tedious work to hold the judgment in suspense for many years; but anybody methinks may wait with patience till a twelvemonth shall pass away, especially when an earthquake of such magnitude is in question. I do not say that Mr. Zichen is deceived; but, if he be not, I will say that he is the first modern prophet who has not both been a subject of deception himself and a deceiver of others. A year will show.

Our love attends all your family. Believe me, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, April 22, 1785.

My dear Friend,—When I received your account of the great celebrity of John Gilpin, I felt myself both flattered and grieved. Being man, and having in my composition all the ingredients of which other men are made, and vanity among the rest, it pleased me to reflect that I was on a sudden become so famous, and that all the world was busy inquiring after me: but the next moment, recollecting my former self, and that thirteen years ago, as harmless as John's history is, I should not then have written it, my spirits sank, and I was ashamed of my success. Your letter was followed the next post by one from Mr. Unwin. You tell me that I am rivalled by Mrs. Bellamy;* and he, that I have a competitor for fame not less formidable in the Learned Pig. Alas! what is an author's popularity worth in a world that can suffer a prostitute on one side, and a pig on the other, to eclipse his brightest glories? I am therefore sufficiently humbled by these considerations: and, unless I should hereafter be ordained to engross the public attention by means more magnificent than a song, am persuaded that I shall suffer no real detriment by their applause. I have produced many things, under the influence of despair, which hope would not have permitted to spring. But if the soil of that melancholy in which I have walked so long, has thrown up here and there an unprofitable fungus, it is well at least that it is not chargeable with having brought forth poison. Like you, I see, or think I can see, that Gilpin may have his use. Causes, in appearance trivial, produce often the most beneficial consequences; and perhaps my volumes may now travel to a distance, which, if they had not been ushered into the world by that notable horseman, they would never have reached. Our temper differs somewhat from that of the ancient Jews. They would neither dance nor weep. We indeed weep not, if a man mourn unto us; but I must needs say that, if he pipe, we seem disposed to dance with the greatest alacrity.

Yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, April 30, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I return you thanks for a letter so warm with the intelligence of the celebrity of John Gilpin. I little thought, when I mounted him upon my Pegasus, that he would become so famous. I have learned also from Mr. Newton that he is equally renowned in Scotland, and that a lady there had undertaken to write a second part, on the subject of Mrs. Gilpin's return to London; but, not succeeding in it as she wished, she dropped it. He tells me likewise that the head master of St. Paul's school (who he is I know not) has conceived, in consequence of the entertainment that John has afforded him, a vehement desire to write to me. Let us hope he will alter his mind; for, should we even exchange civilities on the occasion, Tirocinium will spoil all. The great estimation however in which this knight of the stone-bottles is held may turn out a circumstance propitious to the volume, of which his history will make a part. Those events that prove the prelude to our greatest success are often apparently trivial in them-

* A celebrated actress, who wrote her memoirs, which were much read at that time.

selves, and such as seemed to promise nothing. The disappointment that Horace mentions is reversed—We design a mug, and it proves a hogshead. It is a little hard that I alone should be unfurnished with a printed copy of this facetious story. When you visit London next, you must buy the most elegant impression of it, and bring it with you. I thank you also for writing to Johnson. I likewise wrote to him myself. Your letter and mine together have operated to admiration. There needs nothing more but that the effect be lasting, and the whole will soon be printed. We now draw towards the middle of the fifth book of "The Task." The man, Johnson, is like unto some vicious horses that I have known. They would not budge till they were spurred, and when they were spurred they would kick. So did he—his temper was somewhat disconcerted; but his pace was quickened, and I was contented.

I was very much pleased with the following sentence in Mr. Newton's last—"I am perfectly satisfied with the propriety of your proceeding as to the publication."—Now, therefore, we are friends again. Now he once more inquires after the work, which, till he had disburdened himself of this acknowledgment, neither he nor I in any of our letters to each other ever mentioned. Some side-wind has wafted to him a report of those reasons by which I justified my conduct. I never made a secret of them. Both your mother and I have studiously deposited them with those who we thought were most likely to transmit them to him. They wanted only a hearing, which once obtained, their solidity and cogency were such that they were sure to prevail.

You mention ——. I formerly knew the man you mention, but his elder brother much better. We were school-fellows, and he was one of a club of seven Westminster men, to which I belonged, who dined together every Thursday. Should it please God to give me ability to perform the poet's part to some purpose, many whom I once called friends, but who have since treated me with a most magnificent indifference, will be ready to take me by the hand again, and some, whom I never held in that estimation, will, like ——, who was but a boy when I left London, boast of a connexion with me which they never had. Had I the virtues, and graces, and accomplishments of St. Paul himself, I might have them at Olney, and nobody would care a button about me, yourself and one or two more excepted. Fame begets favor, and one talent, if it be rubbed a little bright by use and practice, will procure a man more friends than a thousand virtues. Dr. Johnson (I believe), in the life of one of our poets, says that he retired from the world flattering himself that he should be regretted. But the world never missed him. I think his observation upon it is, that the vacancy made by the retreat of any individual is soon filled up; that a man may always be obscure, if he chooses to be so; and that he who neglects the world will be by the world neglected.

Your mother and I walked yesterday in the Wilderness. As we entered the gate, a glimpse of something white, contained in a little hole in the gate-post, caught my eye. I looked again, and discovered a bird's nest, with two tiny eggs in it. By-and-by they will be fledged, and tailed, and get wing-feathers, and fly. My case is somewhat similar to that of the parent bird. My nest is in a little nook. Here I brood and hatch, and in due time my progeny takes wing and whistles.

We wait for the time of your coming with pleasant expectations.

Yours truly, W. C.

The following letter records an impressive instance of the instability of human life; and also contains some references, of deep pathos, to his own personal history and feelings.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, May, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I do not know that I shall send you news; but, whether it be news or not, it is necessary that I should relate the fact, lest I should omit an article of intelligence important at least at Olney. The event took place much nearer to you than to us, and yet it is possible that no account of it may yet have reached you.—Mr. Ashburner the elder went to London on Tuesday se'nnight in perfect health and in high spirits, so as to be remarkably cheerful; and was brought home in a hearse the Friday following. Soon after his arrival in town, he complained of an acute pain in his elbow, then in his shoulder, then in both shoulders; was blooded; took two doses of such medicine as an apothecary thought might do him good; and died on Thursday in the morning at ten o'clock. When I first heard the tidings I could hardly credit them; and yet have lived long enough myself to have seen manifold and most convincing proofs that neither health, great strength, nor even youth itself, afford the least security from the stroke of death. It is not common, however, for men at the age of thirty-six to die so suddenly. I saw him but a few days before, with a bundle of gloves and hatbands under his arm, at the door of Geary Ball, who lay at that time a corpse. The following day I

* Private correspondence.

saw him march before the coffin, and lead the procession that attended Geary to the grave. He might be truly said to march, for his step was heroic, his figure athletic, and his countenance as firm and confident as if he had been born only to bury others, and was sure never to be buried himself. Such he appeared to me, while I stood at the window and contemplated his deportment: and then he died.

I am sensible of the tenderness and affectionate kindness with which you recollect our past intercourse, and express your hopes of my future restoration. I too, within the last eight months have had my hopes, though they have been of short duration, cut off like the foam upon the waters. Some previous adjustments indeed are necessary, before a lasting expectation of comfort can have place in me. There are those persuasions in my mind which either entirely forbid the entrance of hope, or, if it enter, immediately eject it. They are incompatible with any such inmate, and must be turned out themselves before so desirable a guest can possibly have secure possession. This, you say, will be done. It may be, but it is not done yet; nor has a single step in the course of God's dealings with me been taken towards it. If I mend, no creature ever mended so slowly that recovered at last. I am like a slug or snail, that has fallen into a deep well: slug as he is, he performs his descent with an alacrity proportioned to his weight; but he does not crawl up again quite so fast. Mine was a rapid plunge; but my return to daylight, if I am indeed returning, is leisurely enough. I wish you a swift progress, and a pleasant one, through the great subject that you have in hand;* and set that value upon your letters to which they are in themselves entitled, but which is certainly increased by that peculiar attention which the writer of them pays to me. Were I such as I once was, I should say that I have a claim upon your particular notice which nothing ought to supersede. Most of your other connexions you may fairly be said to have formed by your own act; but your connexion with me was the work of God. The kine that went up with the ark from Bethshemish left what they loved behind them, in obedience to an impression which to them was perfectly dark and unintelligible.† Your journey to Huntingdon was not less wonderful. He indeed who sent you knew well wherefore, but you knew not. That dispensation therefore would furnish me, as long as we can both remember it, with a plea for some distinction at your hands, had I occasion to use and urge it, which I have not. But I am altered since that time; and if your affection for me has ceased, you might very reasonably justify your change by mine. I can say nothing for myself at present; but this I can venture to foretell, that, should the restoration of which my friends assure me obtain, I shall undoubtedly love those who have continued to love me, even in a state of transformation from my former self, much more than ever. I doubt not that Nebuchadnezzar had friends in his prosperity; all kings have many. But when his nails became like eagles' claws, and he ate grass like an ox, I suppose he had few to pity him.

We are going to pay Mr. Pomfret* a morning visit. Our errand is to see a fine bed of tulips, a sight that I never saw. Fine painting, and God the artist. Mrs. Unwin has something to say in the cover. I leave her therefore to make her own courtesy, and only add that I am yours and Mrs. Newton's

Affectionate W. C.

* Mr. Newton was at this time preparing two volumes of Sermons for the press, on the subject of the Messiah, preached on the occasion of the Commemoration of Handel.

† See 1 Sam. vi. 7—10.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, June 4, 1785.

My dear Friend,—Mr. Greatheed had your letter the day after we received it.‡ He is a well-bred, agreeable young man, and one whose eyes have been opened, I doubt not, for the benefit of others, as well as for his own. He preached at Olney a day or two ago, and I have reason to think with acceptance and success. One person, at least, who had been in prison some weeks, received his enlargement under him. I should have been glad to have been a hearer, but that privilege is not allowed me yet.

My book is at length printed, and I returned the last proof to Johnson on Tuesday. I have ordered a copy to Charles Square, and have directed Johnson to enclose one with it, addressed to John Bacon, Esq. I was obliged to give you this trouble, not being sure of the place of his abode. I have taken the liberty to mention him, as an artist, in terms that he well deserves. The passage was written soon after I received the engraving with which he favored me,§ and while the impression that it made upon me was yet warm. He will therefore excuse the liberty that I have taken, and place it to the account of those feelings which he himself excited.

* The rector at that time of Emberton, near Olney.

† Private correspondence.

‡ The Rev. Mr. Greatheed was a man of piety and talent, and much respected in his day. He wrote a short and interesting memoir of Cowper.

§ The engraving of Bacon's celebrated monument of Lord Chatham, in Westminster Abbey.

The passage alluded to is as follows:—

"Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips."
The Task, Book I.

The walking season is returned. We visit the Wilderness daily. Mr. Throckmorton last summer presented me with the key of his garden. The family are all absent, except the priest and a servant or two; so that the honeysuckles, lilacs, and syringas, are all our own.

We are well, and our united love attends yourselves and the young ladies.

Yours, my dear friend,
With much affection, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, June 25, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I write in a nook that I call my *boudoir*. It is a summer-house not much bigger than a sedan-chair, the door of which opens into the garden, that is now crowded with pinks, roses, and honeysuckles, and the window into my neighbor's orchard. It formerly served an apothecary, now dead, as a smoking-room; and under my feet is a trap-door which once covered a hole in the ground, where he kept his bottles: at present, however, it is dedicated to sublimer uses. Having lined it with garden-mats, and furnished it with a table and two chairs, here I write all that I write in summer time, whether to my friends or to the public. It is secure from all noise, and a refuge from all intrusion; for intruders sometimes trouble me in the winter evenings at Olney: but (thanks to my *boudoir!*) I can now hide myself from them. A poet's retreat is sacred: they acknowledge the truth of that proposition, and never presume to violate it.*

The last sentence puts me in mind to tell you that I have ordered my volume to your door. My bookseller is the most dilatory of all his fraternity, or you would have received it long since. It is more than a month since I returned him the last proof, and consequently, since the printing was finished. I sent him the manuscript at the beginning of last November, that he might publish while the town was full, and he will hit the exact moment when it is entirely empty. Patience (you will perceive) is in no situation exempted from the severest trials: a remark that may serve to comfort you under the numberless trials of your own.

W. C.

* Cowper's summer-house is still in existence. It is a small, humble building, situate at the back of the premises which he occupied at Olney, and commanding a full view of the church and of the vicarage-house. Humble however as it appears, it is approached with those feelings of veneration which the scene of so many interesting recollections cannot fail to inspire. There he wrote "The Task," and most of his Poems, except during the rigor of the winter months. There too he carried on that epistolatory correspondence, which is distinguished by so much wit, ease and gracefulness, and by the overflowings of a warm and affectionate heart. No traveller seems to enter without considering it to be the shrine of the muses, and leaving behind a poetical tribute to the memory of so distinguished an author.

Cowper again feelingly alludes in the letter which follows, to that absence of mental comfort under which he so habitually labored.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, June 25, 1785.

My dear Friend,—A note that we received from Mr. Scott, by your desire, informing us of the amendment of Mrs. Newton's health, demands our thanks, having relieved us from no little anxiety upon her account. The welcome purport of it was soon after confirmed, so that at present we feel ourselves at liberty to hope that by this time Mrs. Newton's recovery is complete. Sally's looks do credit to the air of Hoxton. She seems to have lost nothing, either in complexion or dimensions, by her removal hence; and, which is still more to the credit of your great town, she seems in spiritual things also to be the very same Sally whom we knew once at Olney. Situation therefore is nothing. They who have the means of grace and an art to use them, will thrive anywhere; others, nowhere. More than a few, who were formerly ornaments of this garden which you once watered, here flourished, and here have seemed to wither. Others, transplanted into a soil apparently less favorable to their growth, either find the exchange an advantage, or at least are not impaired by it. Of myself, who had once both leaves and fruit, but who have now neither, I say nothing, or only this—that when I am overwhelmed with despair I repine at my barrenness, and think it hard to be thus blighted: but when a glimpse of hope breaks in upon me, I am contented to be the sapless thing I am, knowing that He who has commanded me to wither can command me to flourish again when He pleases. My experiences however of this latter kind are rare and transient. The light that reaches me cannot be compared either to that of the sun or of the moon. It is a flash in a dark night, during which the heavens seem opened only to shut again.

We inquired, but could not learn, that anything memorable passed in the last moments of poor Nathan. I listened in expectation that he would at least acknowledge what all who knew him in his more lively days had so long seen and lamented, his neglect of the best things, and his eager pursuit of riches. But he was totally silent upon that subject. Yet it was evident that the cares of the world had choked in him much of the good seed, and that he was no longer the Nathan whom we have so often heard at the old house, rich in spirit, though poor in expression: whose desires were unutterable in every sense, both because they

* Private correspondence.

were too big for language, and because Nathan had no language for them. I believe with you however that he is safe at home. He had a weak head and strong passions, which He who made him well knew, and for which He would undoubtedly make great allowance. The forgiveness of God is large and absolute; so large, that though in general He calls for confession of our sins, He sometimes dispenses with that preliminary, and will not suffer even the delinquent himself to mention his transgression. He has so forgiven it, that He seems to have forgotten it too, and will have the sinner to forget it also. Such instances perhaps may not be common, but I know that there have been such, and it might be so with Nathan.

I know not what Johnson is about, neither do I now inquire. It will be a month tomorrow since I returned him the last proof. He might, I suppose, have published by this time without hurrying himself into a fever, or breaking his neck through the violence of his despatch. But having never seen the book advertised, I conclude that he has not. Had the Parliament risen at the usual time, he would have been just too late, and though it sits longer than usual, or is likely to do so, I should not wonder if he were too late at last. Dr. Johnson laughs at Savage for charging the still-birth of a poem of his upon the bookseller's delay; yet, when Dr. Johnson had a poem of his own to publish, no man ever discovered more anxiety to meet the market. But I have taken thought about it till I am grown weary of the subject, and at last have placed myself much at my ease upon the cushion of this one resolution, that, if ever I have dealings hereafter with my present manager, we will proceed upon other terms.

Mr. Wright called here last Sunday, by whom Lord Dartmouth made obliging inquiries after the volume, and was pleased to say that he was impatient to see it. I told him that I had ordered a copy to his lordship, which I hoped he would receive, if not soon, at least before he should retire into the country. I have also ordered one to Mr. Barham.

We suffer in this country very much by drought. The corn, I believe, is in most places thin, and the hay harvest amounts in some to not more than the fifth of a crop. Heavy taxes, excessive levies for the poor, and lean acres, have brought our farmers almost to their wits' end; and many who are not farmers are not very remote from the same point of despondency. I do not despond, because I was never much addicted to anxious thoughts about the future in respect of temporals. But I feel myself a little angry with a minister who, when he imposed a tax upon gloves, was not ashamed to call them a luxury. Caps and boots lined with fur are not accounted a luxury in Russia, neither can gloves be reasonably deemed such in a climate sometimes hardly less severe than that. Nature indeed is content with little, and luxury seems, in some respect, rather relative than of any fixed construction. Accordingly it may become in time a luxury for an Englishman to wear breeches, because it is possible to exist without them, and because persons of a moderate income may find them too expensive. I hope however to be hid in the dust before that day shall come; for, having worn them so many years, if they be indeed a luxury, they are such a one as I could very ill spare; yet spare them I must, if I cannot afford to wear them.

We are tolerably well in health, and as to spirits, much as usual—seldom better, sometimes worse.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, July 9, 1785.

My dear Friend,—You wrong your own judgment when you represent it as not to be trusted; and mine, if you suppose that I have that opinion of it. Had you disapproved, I should have been hurt and mortified. No man's disapprobation would have hurt me more. Your favorable sentiments of my book must consequently give me pleasure in the same proportion. By the post, last Sunday, I had a letter from Lord Dartmouth, in which he thanked me for my volume, of which he had read only a part. Of that part however he expresses himself in terms with which my authorship has abundant cause to be satisfied; and adds that the specimen has made him impatient for the whole. I have likewise received a letter from a judicious friend of mine in London, and a man of fine taste, unknown to you, who speaks of it in the same language. Fortified by these cordials, I feel myself qualified to face the world without much anxiety, and delivered in a great measure from those fears which I suppose all men feel upon the like occasion.

My first volume I sent, as you may remember, to the Lord Chancellor, accompanied by a friendly but respectful epistle. His Lordship however thought it not worth his while to return me any answer, or to take the least notice of my present. I sent it also to Colman, with whom I once was intimate. He likewise proved too great a man to recollect me; and, though he has published since, did not account it necessary to return the compliment. I have allowed myself to be a little

* Private correspondence.

pleased with an opportunity to show them that I resent their treatment of me, and have sent this book to neither of them. They indeed are the former friends to whom I particularly allude in my epistle to Mr. Hill; and it is possible that they may take to themselves a censure that they so well deserve. If not, it matters not; for I shall never have any communication with them hereafter.

If Mr. Bates has found it difficult to furnish you with a motto to your volumes I have no reason to imagine that I shall do it easily. I shall not leave my books unransacked; but there is something so new and peculiar in the occasion that suggested your subject, that I question whether in all the classics can be found a sentence suited to it. Our sins and follies, in this country, assume a shape that heathen writers had never any opportunity to notice. They deified the dead indeed, but not in the Temple of Jupiter.* The new-made god had an altar of his own; and they conducted the ceremony without sacrilege or confusion. It is possible however, and I think barely so, that somewhat may occur susceptible of accommodation to your purpose; and if it should, I shall be happy to serve you with it.

I told you, I believe, that the spinney has been cut down; and, though it may seem sufficient to have mentioned such an occurrence once, I cannot help recurring to the melancholy theme. Last night, at near nine o'clock, we entered it for the first time this summer. We had not walked many yards in it, before we perceived that this pleasant retreat is destined never to be a pleasant retreat again. In one more year, the whole will be a thicket. That which was once the serpentine walk is now in a state of transformation, and is already become as woody as the rest. Poplars and elms without number are springing in the turf. They are now as high as the knee. Before the summer is ended they will be twice as high: and the growth of another season will make them trees. It will then be impossible for any but a sportsman and his dog to penetrate it. The desolation of the whole scene is such that it sank our spirits. The ponds are dry. The circular one, in front of the hermitage, is filled with flags and rushes; so that if it contains any water, not a drop is visible. The weeping willow at the side of it, the only ornamental plant that has escaped the axe, is dead. The ivy and the moss, with which the hermitage was lined, are torn away; and the very mats that covered the benches have been stripped off, rent in tatters, and trodden under foot. So farewell, spinney; I have promised myself that I will never enter it again. We have both prayed in it: you for me, and I for you. But it is desecrated from this time forth, and the voice of prayer will be heard in it no more. The fate of it in this respect, however deplorable, is not peculiar. The spot where Jacob anointed his pillar, and, which is more apposite, the spot once honored with the presence of Him who dwelt in the bush, have long since suffered similar disgrace, and are become common ground.

There is great severity in the application of the text you mention—I am *their music*. But it is not the worse for that. We both approve it highly. The other in Ezekiel does not seem quite so pat. The prophet complains that his word was to the people like a pleasant song, heard with delight, but soon forgotten. At the Commemoration, I suppose that the word is nothing, but the music all in all. The Bible however will abundantly supply you with applicable passages. All passages, indeed, that animadvert upon the profanation of God's house and worship seem to present themselves upon the occasion.

Accept our love and best wishes; and believe me, my dear friend, with warm and true affection,

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 27, 1785.

My dear William,—You and your party left me in a frame of mind that indisposed me much to company. I comforted myself with the hope that I should spend a silent day, in which I should find abundant leisure to indulge sensations, which, though of the melancholy kind, I yet wished to nourish. But that hope proved vain. In less than an hour after your departure, Mr. —— made his appearance at the greenhouse door. We were obliged to ask him to dinner, and he dined with us. He is an agreeable, sensible, well-bred young man, but with all his recommendations I felt that on that occasion I could have spared him. So much better are the absent, whom we love much, than the present whom we love a little. I have however made myself amends since, and, nothing else having interfered, have sent many a thought after you.

You had been gone two days, when a violent thunder-storm came over us. I was passing out of the parlor into the hall, with

* Cowper alludes, in this passage, to the Commemoration of Handel, in Westminster Abbey, and its resemblance to an act of canonization. His censure is doubly recorded; in poetry, as well as in prose:—

"Ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration mad; content to hear
(O wonderful effect of Music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve." &c.
The Task, Book VI.

Mungo at my heels, when a flash seemed to fill the room with fire. In the same instant came the clap, so that the explosion was, I suppose, perpendicular to the roof. Mungo's courage upon the tremendous occasion constrained me to smile, in spite of the solemn impression that such an event never fails to affect me with—the moment that he heard the thunder (which was like the burst of a great gun) with a wrinkled forehead, and with eyes directed to the ceiling, whence the sound seemed to proceed, he barked; but he barked exactly in concert with the thunder. It thundered once, and he barked once, and so precisely the very instant when the thunder happened, that both sounds seemed to begin and end together. Some dogs will clap their tails close, and sneak into a corner at such a time, but Mungo it seems is of a more fearless family. A house at no great distance from ours was the mark to which the lightning was directed; it knocked down the chimney, split the building, and carried away the corner of the next house, in which lay a fellow drunk and asleep upon his bed. It roused and terrified him, and he promises to get drunk no more; but I have seen a woeful end of many such conversions. I remember but one such storm at Olney since I have known the place, and I am glad that it did not happen two days sooner for the sake of the ladies, who would probably, one of them at least, have been alarmed by it. I have received, since you went, two very flattering letters of thanks, one from Mr. Bacon, and one from Mr. Barham, such as might make a lean poet plump and an humble poet proud. But, being myself neither lean nor humble, I know of no other effect they had than that they pleased me; and I communicate the intelligence to you, not without an assured hope that you will be pleased also. We are now going to walk, and thus far I have written before I have received your letter.

Friday.—I must now be as compact as possible. When I began, I designed four sides, but, my packet being tranformed into two single epistles, I can consequently afford you but three. I have filled a large sheet with animadversions upon Pope. I am proceeding with my translation—

"Velis et remis, omnibus nervis."

as Hudibras has it: and if God give me health and ability, will put it into your hands when I see you next. Mr. —— has just left us. He has read my book, and, as if fearful that I had overlooked some of them myself, has pointed out to me all its beauties. I do assure you the man has a very acute discernment, and a taste that I have no fault to find with. I hope that you are of the same opinion.

Be not sorry that your love of Christ was excited in you by a picture. Could a dog or a cat suggest to me the thought that Christ is precious, I would not despise that thought because a dog or cat suggested it. The meanness of the instrument cannot debase the nobleness of the principle. He that kneels before a picture of Christ is an idolater. But he in whose heart the sight of a picture kindles a warm remembrance of the Saviour's sufferings, must be a Christian. Suppose that I dream, as Gardiner did, that Christ walks before me, that he turns and smiles upon me, and fills my soul with ineffable love and joy, will a man tell me that I am deceived, that I ought not to love or rejoice in him for such a reason, because a dream is merely a picture drawn upon the imagination! I hold not with such divinity. To love Christ is the greatest dignity of man, be that affection wrought in him how it may.

Adieu! May the blessing of God be upon you all! It is your mother's heart's wish and mine.

Yours ever, W. C.

The humble and unostentatious spirit and the fine tone of Christian feeling which pervade the following letter, impart to it a peculiar interest.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Aug. 6, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I found your account of what you experienced in your state of maiden authorship very entertaining, because very natural. I suppose that no man ever made his first sally from the press without a conviction that all eyes and ears would be engaged to attend him, at least, without a thousand anxieties lest they should not. But, however arduous and interesting such an enterprise may be in the first instance, it seems to me that our feelings on the occasion soon become obtuse. I can answer at least for one. Mine are by no means what they were when I published my first volume. I am even so indifferent to the matter, that I can truly assert myself guiltless of the very idea of my book, sometimes whole days together. God knows that, my mind having been occupied more than twelve years in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, the world, and its opinion of what I write, is become as unimportant to me as the whistling of a bird in a bush. Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement. Had I not endeavored to perform my best, it would not have amused me at all. The mere blotting of so much paper would have been but indifferent sport. God gave me grace also to wish that I might not write in vain. Ac-

* Private correspondence.

cordingly I have mingled much truth with much trifle; and such truths as deserved at least to be clad as well and as handsomely as I could clothe them. If the world approve me not, so much the worse for them, but not for me. I have only endeavored to serve them, and the loss will be their own. And as to their commendations, if I should chance to win them, I feel myself equally invulnerable there. The view that I have had of myself, for many years, has been so truly humiliating, that I think the praises of all mankind could not hurt me. God knows that I speak my present sense of the matter at least most truly, when I say that the admiration of creatures like myself seems to me a weapon the least dangerous that my worst enemy could employ against me. I am fortified against it by such solidity of real self-abasement, that I deceive myself most egregiously if I do not heartily despise it. Praise belongeth to God; and I seem to myself to covet it no more than I covet divine honors. Could I assuredly hope that God would at last deliver me, I should have reason to thank him for all that I have suffered, were it only for the sake of this single fruit of my affliction—that it has taught me how much more contemptible I am in myself than I ever before suspected, and has reduced my former share of self-knowledge (of which at that time I had a tolerably good opinion) to a mere nullity, in comparison with what I have acquired since. Self is a subject of inscrutable misery and mischief, and can never be studied to so much advantage as in the dark; for as the bright beams of the sun seem to impart a beauty to the foulest objects, and can make even a dunghill smile, so the light of God's countenance, vouchsafed to a fallen creature, so sweetens him and softens him for the time, that he seems, both to others and to himself, to have nothing savage or sordid about him. *But the heart is a nest of serpents, and will be such whilst it continues to beat. If God cover the mouth of that nest with his hand, they are hush and snug; but if he withdraw his hand, the whole family lift up their heads and hiss, and are as active and venomous as ever.* This I always professed to believe from the time that I had embraced the truth, but never knew it as I know it now. To what end I have been made to know it as I do, whether for the benefit of others, or for my own, or for both, or for neither, will appear hereafter.

What I have written leads me naturally to the mention of a matter that I had forgot. I should blame nobody, not even my intimate friends, and those who have the most favorable opinion of me, were they to charge the publication of John Gilpin, at the end of so much solemn and serious truth, to the score of the author's vanity; and to suspect that, however sober I may be upon proper occasions, I have yet that itch of popularity that would not suffer me to sink my title to a jest that had been so successful. But the case is not such. When I sent the copy of "The Task" to Johnson, I desired, indeed, Mr. Unwin to ask him the question whether or not he would choose to make it a part of the volume! This I did merely with a view to promote the sale of it. Johnson answered, "By all means." Some months afterwards he enclosed a note to me in one of my packets, in which he expressed a change of mind, alleging, that to print John Gilpin would only be to print what had been hackneyed in every magazine, in every shop, and at the corner of every street. I answered that I desired to be entirely governed by his opinion; and that if he chose to waive it, I should be better pleased with the omission. Nothing more passed between us upon the subject, and I concluded that I should never have the immortal honor of being generally known as the author of John Gilpin. In the last packet, however, down came John, very fairly printed and equipped for public appearance. The business having taken this turn, I concluded that Johnson had adopted my original thought, that it might prove advantageous to the sale; and as he had had the trouble and expense of printing it, I corrected the copy, and let it pass. Perhaps, however, neither the book nor the writer may be made much more famous by John's good company than they would have been without it; for the volume has never yet been advertised, nor can I learn that Johnson intends it. He fears the expense, and the consequence must be prejudicial. Many who would purchase will remain uninformed: but I am perfectly content.

I have considered your motto, and like the purport of it: but the best, because the most laconic manner of it, seems to be this—

Cum talis sis, sis noster;

utinam being, in my account of it, unnecessary.*

Yours, my dear friend, most truly, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Olney, Aug. 17, 1785.

My dear Friend.—I did very warmly and very sincerely thank Mr. Bacon for his most friendly and obliging letter; but, having written my acknowledgements in the cover, I suppose that they escaped your notice. I should not have contented myself with transmitting them through your hands, but should

* The original passage as follows:—

Cum talis sis, utinam noster esses.

If intended, therefore, as a quotation, it should be quoted without alteration.

† Private correspondence.

have addressed them immediately to himself, but that I foresaw plainly this inconvenience: that in writing to him on such an occasion, I must almost unavoidably make self and self's book the subject. Therefore it was, as Mr. Unwin can vouch for me, that I denied myself that pleasure. I place this matter now in the van of all that I have to say: first, that you may not overlook it; secondly, because it is uppermost in my consideration; and thirdly, because I am impatient to be exculpated from the seeming omission.

You told me, I think, that you seldom read the papers. In our last we had an extract from Johnson's Diary, or whatever else he called it. It is certain that the publisher of it is neither much a friend to the cause of religion, nor to the author's memory; for, by the specimen of it that has reached us, it seems to contain only such stuff as has a direct tendency to expose both to ridicule. His prayers for the dead, and his minute account of the rigor with which he observed church fasts, whether he drank tea or coffee, whether with sugar or without, and whether one or two dishes of either, are the most important items to be found in this childish register of the great Johnson, supreme dictator in the chair of literature, and almost a driveller in his closet; a melancholy witness to testify how much of the wisdom of this world may consist with almost infantine ignorance of the affairs of a better. I remember a good man at Huntingdon, who, I doubt not, is now with God, and he also kept a Diary. After his death, through the neglect or foolish wantonness of his executors, it came abroad for the amusement of his neighbors. All the town saw it, and all the town found it highly diverting. It contained much more valuable matter than the poor Doctor's journal seems to do; but it contained also a faithful record of all his deliverances from wind, (for he was much troubled with flatulence,) together with pious acknowledgments of the mercy. There is certainly a call for gratitude, whatsoever benefit we receive; and it is equally certain that we ought to be humbled under the recollection of our least offences; but it would have been as well if neither my old friend had recorded his eructations, nor the Doctor his dishes of sugarless tea, or the dinner at which he ate too much. I wonder, indeed, that any man of such learned eminence as Johnson, who knew that every word he uttered was deemed oracular, and that every scratch of his pen was accounted a treasure, should leave behind him what he would have blushed to exhibit while he lived. If Virgil would have burnt his Æneid, how much more reason had these good men to have burnt their journals!

Mr. Perry will leave none such behind him. He is dying, as I suppose you have heard. Dr. Kerr, who, I think, has visited him twice or thrice, desired at his last visit to be no more sent for. He pronounced his case hopeless; for that his thigh and leg must mortify. He is however in a most comfortable frame of mind. So long as he thought it possible that he might recover, he was much occupied with a review of his ministry; and, under a deep impression of his deficiencies in that function, assured Mr. R—— that he intended, when he should enter upon it again, to be much more diligent than he had been. He was conscious, he said, that many fine things had been said of him; but that, though he trusted he had found grace so to walk as not to dishonor his office, he was conscious at the same time how little he deserved them. This, with much more to the same purport, passed on Sunday last. On Thursday, Mr. R—— was with him again; and at that time Mr. Perry knew that he must die. The rules and cautions that he had before prescribed to himself, he then addressed directly to his visitor. He exhorted him by all means to be earnest and affectionate in his applications to the unconverted, and not less solicitous to admonish the careless, with a head full of light, and a heart alienated from the ways of God; and those, no less, who being wise in their own conceit, were much occupied with matters above their reach, and very little with subjects of immediate and necessary concern. He added that he had received from God, during his illness, other views of sin than he had ever been favored with before; and exhorted him by all means to be watchful. Mr. R—— being himself the reporter of these conversations, it is to be supposed that they impressed him. Admonitions from such lips, and in a dying time too, must have their weight; and it is well with the hearer, when the instruction abides with him. But our own view of these matters is, I believe, that alone which can effectually serve us. The representations of a dying man may strike us at the time; and, if they stir up in us a spirit of self-examination and inquiry, so that we rest not till we have made his views and experience our own, it is well; otherwise, the wind that passes us is hardly sooner gone than the effect of the most serious exhortations.

Farewell, my friend. My views of my spiritual state are, as you say, altered; but they are yet far from being such as they must be, before I can be enduringly comforted.

Yours unfeignedly, W. C.

The Diary of Dr. Johnson, adverted to in the last letter, created both surprise and disappointment. The great moralist of the age there appears in his real character, distinct from that external splendor with which popular admiration always encircles the brow of

genius. The portrait is drawn by his own hand. We cannot withhold our praise from the ingenuousness with which he discloses the secret recesses of his heart, and the fidelity with which conscience exercises its inquisitorial power over the life and actions. We are also affected by the deep humility, the confession of sin, and the earnest appeal for mercy, discernible in many of the prayers and meditations. But viewed as a whole, this Diary creates painful feelings, and affords occasion for much reflection. If therefore we indulge in a few remarks, founded on some of the extracts, it is not to detract from the high fame of so distinguished a scholar, whom we consider to have enlarged the bounds of British literature, and to have acquired a lasting title to public gratitude and esteem, but to perform a solemn and conscientious duty.* We are now arrived at a period when it is high time to establish certain great and momentous truths in the public mind; and, among those that are of primary importance, to prove that conversion is not a term, but a principle; not the designation of a party but the enjoined precept of a Saviour; the evidence of our claim to the title of Christian, and indispensable to constitute our meetness for the enjoyment of heaven.

We now extract the following passages from the Diary of Dr. Johnson, with the intention of adding a few comments.

Easter-day, 1765.—"Since the last Easter, I have reformed no evil habit; my time has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream, that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me."

"I purpose to rise at eight, because, though I shall not yet rise early, it will be much earlier than I now rise, for I often lie till two; and will gain me much time, and tend to a conquest over idleness, and give time for other duties."

Sept. 18, 1768.—"I have now begun the sixtieth year of my life. How the last year has past I am unwilling to terrify myself with thinking."

Jan. 1, 1769.—"I am now about to begin another year: how the last has passed it would be, in my state of weakness, perhaps not prudent too solicitously to recollect."

1772.—"I resolved last Easter to read, within the year, the whole Bible, a very great part of which I had never looked upon. I read the Greek Testament without construing, and this day concluded the Apocalypse. I think that no part was missed."

"My purpose of reading the rest of the Bible was forgotten, till I took by chance the resolutions of last Easter in my hand."

"I hope to read the whole Bible once a year, as long as I live."

April 26.—"It is a comfort to me, that at last, in my sixty-third year, I have attained to know, even thus hastily, confusedly, and imperfectly, what my Bible contains."

1775.—"Yesterday, I do not recollect that to go to church came into my thoughts; but I sat in my chamber preparing for preparation: interrupted I know not how. I was near two hours at dinner."

1777.—"I have this year omitted church on most Sundays, intending to supply the deficiency in the week. So that *I owe twelve attendances on worship.*"

"When I look back upon resolutions of improvement and amendment which have, year after year, been made and broken, either by negligence, forgetfulness, vicious idleness, casual interruption, or morbid infirmity; when I find that so much of my life has stolen unprofitably away, and that I can descry, by retrospection, scarcely a few single days properly and vigorously employed, why do I yet try to resolve again? I try, because reformation is necessary, and despair criminal; I try in humble hope of the help of God."*

Our sole object, in the introduction of these extracts, is to found upon them an appeal to those who question the necessity of conversion, in that higher sense and acceptation which implies an inward principle of grace, changing and transforming the heart. We would beg to ask whether it was not the want of the vital power and energy of this principle, that produced in Johnson the vacillation of mind and purpose, which we have just recorded; the hours lost; the resolutions broken; the Sabbaths violated; and the sacred volume not read, till the shades of evening advanced upon him? What instance can be adduced that more clearly demonstrates the insufficiency of the highest acquirements of human learning, and that nothing but a Divine power can illuminate the mind, and convert the heart? Happily, Johnson is known to have at length found what he needed, and to have died with a full hope of immortality.†

But we would go further. We maintain that all men, without respect of character or person, need conversion; for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" all partake of the corruption and infirmities of a fallen nature, and inherit the primeval curse. Shall reason, shall philosophy effect the cure? Reason sees what is right; erring nature, in despite of reason, follows what is wrong.

* "If there is a regard due to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth."

"It is the business of a biographer to pass lightly over those performances and actions which produce vulgar greatness; to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appearances are laid aside."—*Rambler*, No. 60, Vol. ii.

* See Diary of Dr. Johnson.

† See p. 191.

Philosophy can penetrate into the abstrusest mysteries, ascertain by what laws the universe is governed, and trace the heavenly bodies in their courses, but cannot eradicate one evil passion from the soul. Where then lies the remedy? The Gospel reveals it. And what is the Gospel? The Gospel is a dispensation of grace and mercy, for the recovery of fallen man, *and the application of this remedy to the heart and conscience effects that conversion of which we are speaking.* But by whom or by what applied? By Him who holds "the keys of heaven and of hell," who "openeth, and no man shutteth," and whose prerogative it is to say, "Behold, I make all things new."* And how? By his word, and by his Spirit. "He sent *his word* and healed them."† "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by *the word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever."‡ The word is the appointed instrument, the Spirit, the mighty agent which gives the quickening power:§ not by any supernatural revelation, but in the ordinary operations of divine grace, and consistently with the freedom and co-operation of man as a moral agent: speaking pardon and peace to the conscience, and delivering from the tyranny of sense and the slavery of fear, by proclaiming "liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

The last subject for reflection suggested by the Diary of Dr. Johnson, is the frequent neglect of the Sabbath, and his confession that *he had lived a stranger to the greater part of the contents of his Bible till the sixty-third year of his age.* This is an afflicting record, and we notice the fact, from a deep conviction that piety can never retain its power and ascendancy in the heart, where the Bible is not read, and the ordinances of God are frequently neglected. When will genius learn that its noblest attribute is to light its fires at the lamp of divine truth, and that the union of piety and learning is the highest perfection of our nature? We beg to commend to the earnest attention of the student the following eloquent testimony to the sacred volume from the pen of Sir William Jones.

"I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the Volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written."‖

Having quoted Sir William Jones's testimony, we conclude by urging his example.

"Before thy mystic altar, Heavenly Truth,
I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth:
Thus let me kneel, till this dull form decay,
And life's last shade be brighten'd by thy ray.
Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
Soar without bound, without consuming glow."*

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, August 27, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I was low in spirits yesterday, when your parcel came and raised them. Every proof of attention and regard to a man who lives in a vinegar-bottle is welcome from his friends on the outside of it; accordingly your books were welcome (you must not forget, by the way, that I want the original, of which you have sent me the translation only), and the ruffles from Miss Shuttleworth most welcome. I am covetous, if ever man was, of living in the remembrance of absentees, whom I highly value and esteem, and consequently felt myself much gratified by her very obliging present. I have had more comfort, far more comfort, in the connexions that I have formed within the last twenty years, than in the more numerous ones that I had before.

Memorandum.—The latter are almost all Unwins or Unwinisms.

You are entitled to my thanks also for the facetious engravings of John Gilpin. A serious poem is like a swan: it flies heavily, and never far; but a jest has the wings of a swallow that never tire, and that carry it into every nook and corner. I am perfectly a stranger, however, to the reception that my volume meets with, and, I believe, in respect of my *nonchalance* upon that subject, if authors would but copy so fair an example, am a most exemplary character. I must tell you nevertheless that, although the laurels that I gain at Olney will never minister much to my pride, I have acquired some. The Rev. Mr. Scott is my admirer, and thinks my second volume superior to my first. It ought to be so. If we do not improve by practice, then nothing can mend us; and a man has no more cause to be mortified at being told that he has excelled himself, than the elephant had, whose praise it was that he was the greatest elephant in the world, himself excepted.

If it be fair to judge of a book by an extract, I do not wonder that you were so little edified by Johnson's Journal. It is even more ridiculous than was poor ——'s, of flatulent memory. The portion of it given to us in this day's paper contains not one sentiment worth one farthing except the last, in which he resolves to bind himself with no more un-

* Rev. xxi. 5. † Psalm cvii. 20.
‡ 1 Pet. i. 23. See also Heb. iv. 12.
§ "It is the spirit that quickeneth." John vi. 63. The union of the Word and the Spirit in imparting spiritual life to the soul is forcibly expressed in the same verse: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."
‖ See Lord Teignmouth's Life of Sir William Jones.

* Ibid.

bidden obligations. Poor man! one would think that to pray for his dead wife, and to pinch himself with church-fasts had been almost the whole of his religion. I am sorry that he who was so manly an advocate for the cause of virtue in all other places was so childishly employed, and so superstitiously, too, in his closet. Had he studied his Bible more, to which, by his own confession, he was in great part a stranger, he had known better what use to make of his retired hours, and had trifled less. His lucubrations of this sort have rather the appearance of religious dotage than of any vigorous exertions towards God. It will be well if the publication prove not hurtful in its effects, by exposing the best cause, already too much despised, to ridicule still more profane. On the other side of the same paper, I find a long string of aphorisms, and maxims, and rules for the conduct of life, which, though they appear not with his name, are so much in his manner, with the above-mentioned, that I suspect them for his. I have not read them all, but several of them I read that were trivial enough: for the sake of one, however, I forgive him the rest—he advises never to banish hope entirely, because it is the cordial of life, although it be the greatest flatterer in the world. Such a measure of hope as may not endanger my peace by a disappointment I would wish to cherish upon every subject in which I am interested: but there lies the difficulty. A cure, however, and the only one, for all the irregularities of hope and fear, is found in submission to the will of God. Happy they that have it.

This last sentence puts me in mind of your reference to Blair in a former letter, whom you there permitted to be your arbiter to adjust the respective claims of *who* or *that*. I do not rashly differ from so great a grammarian, nor do, at any rate, differ from him altogether—upon solemn occasions, as in prayer or preaching, for instance, I would be strictly correct, and upon stately ones; for instance, were I writing an epic poem, I would be so likewise, but not upon familiar occasions. God, *who* heareth prayer, is right: Hector, *who* saw Patroclus, is right: and the man, *that* dresses me every day, is in my mind, right also: because the contrary would give an air of stiffness and pedantry to an expression that, in respect of the matter of it, cannot be too negligently made up.

Adieu, my dear William! I have scribbled with all my might, which, breakfast-time excepted, has been my employment ever since I rose, and it is now past one.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Sept. 24, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I am sorry that an excursion, which you would otherwise have found so agreeable, was attended with so great a drawback upon its pleasures as Miss Cunningham's illness must needs have been. Had she been able to bathe in the sea, it might have been of service to her, but I knew her weakness and delicacy of habit to be such as did not encourage any very sanguine hopes that the regimen would suit her. I remember Southampton well, having spent much time there; but, though I was young, and had no objections, on the score of conscience, either to dancing or cards, I never was in the assembly-room in my life. I never was fond of company, and especially disliked it in the country. A walk to Netley Abbey, or to Freemantle, or to Redbridge, or a book by the fire-side, had always more charms for me than any other amusement that the place afforded. I was also a sailor, and, being of Sir Thomas Hesketh's party, who was himself born one, was often pressed into the service. But, though I gave myself an air and wore trowsers, I had no genuine right to that honor, disliking much to be occupied in great waters, unless in the finest weather. How they continue to elude the wearisomeness that attends a sea life, who take long voyages, you know better than I; but, for my own part, I seldom have sailed so far as from Hampton river to Portsmouth without feeling the confinement irksome, and sometimes to a degree that was almost insupportable. There is a certain perverseness, of which I believe all men have a share, but of which no man has a larger share than I—I mean that temper, or humor, or whatever it is to be called, that indisposes us to a situation, though not unpleasant in itself, merely because we cannot get out of it. I could not endure the room in which I now write, were I conscious that the door were locked. In less than five minutes I should feel myself a prisoner, though I can spend hours in it under an assurance that I may leave it when I please without experiencing any tedium at all. It was for this reason, I suppose, that the yacht was always disagreeable to me. Could I have stepped out of it into a cornfield or a garden, I should have liked it well enough, but, being surrounded with water, I was as much confined in it as if I had been surrounded by fire, and did not find that it made me any adequate compensation for such an abridgment of my liberty. I make little doubt but Noah was glad when he was enlarged from the ark; and we are sure that Jonah was, when he came out of the fish; and so was I to escape from the good sloop the Harriet.

* Private correspondence.

In my last, I wrote you word that Mr. Perry was given over by his friends, and pronounced a dead man by his physician. Just when I had reached the end of the foregoing paragraph, he came in. His errand hither was to bring two letters, which I enclose; one is to yourself, in which he will give you, I doubt not, such an account, both of his body and mind, as will make all that I might say upon those subjects superfluous. The only consequences of his illness seem to be that he looks a little pale, and that, though always a most excellent man, he is still more angelic than he was. Illness sanctified is better than health. But I know a man who has been a sufferer by a worse illness than his, almost these fourteen years, and who, at present, is only the worse for it.

Mr. Scott called upon us yesterday; he is much inclined to set up a Sunday School, if he can raise a fund for the purpose. Mr. Jones has had one some time at Clifton, and Mr. Unwin writes me word, that he has been thinking of nothing else day and night, for a fortnight. It is a wholesome measure, that seems to bid fair to be pretty generally adopted, and, for the good effects that it promises deserves well to be so. I know not, indeed, while the spread of the gospel continues so limited as it is, how a reformation of manners in the lower class of mankind can be brought to pass; or by what other means the utter abolition of all principle among them, moral as well as religious, can possibly be prevented. Heathenish parents can only bring up heathenish children; an assertion nowhere oftener or more clearly illustrated than at Olney; where children, seven years of age, infest the streets every evening with curses and with songs, to which it would be unseemly to give their proper epithet. Such urchins as these could not be so diabolically accomplished, unless by the connivance of their parents. It is well indeed if, in some instances, their parents be not themselves their instructors. Judging by their proficiency, one can hardly suppose any other. It is therefore, doubtless, an act of the greatest charity, to snatch them out of such hands before the inveteracy of the evil shall have made it desperate. Mr. Teedon, I should imagine, will be employed as a teacher, should this expedient be carried into effect. I know not at least that we have any other person among us so well qualified for the service. He is indisputably a Christian man, and miserably poor, whose revenues need improvement, as much as any children in the world can possibly need instruction.

Believe me, my dear friend,
With true affection, yours,
W. C.

The first establishment of Sunday schools in England, which commenced about this time, is too important an era to be passed over in silence. The founder of this system, so beneficial in its consequences to the rising generation, was Robert Raikes, Esq., of Gloucester, and from whose lips the writer once received the history of their first institution. He had observed in going to divine worship on the Sabbath, that the streets were generally filled with groups of idle and ragged children, playing and blaspheming in a manner that showed their utter unconsciousness of the sacred obligations of that day. The thought suggested itself, that, if these children could be collected together, and the time so misapplied be devoted to instruction and attendance at the house of God, a happy change might be effected in their life and conduct. He consulted the clergyman of the parish, who encouraged the attempt. A respectable and pious female was immediately selected, and twelve children, who were shortly afterwards decently clothed, were placed under her care. Rules and regulations were formed, and the school opened and closed with prayer. The ignorant were taught to read, the word of God was introduced, and the children walked in orderly procession to church. The visible improvement in their moral habits, and their proficiency in learning, led to an extension of the plan. The principal inhabitants of the town became interested in its success, and in a short time the former noisy inmates of the streets were found uniting in the accents of prayer and praise in the temple of Jehovah. The example manifested by the city of Gloucester soon attracted public attention. The queen of George the Third requested to be furnished with the history and particulars of the undertaking, and was so impressed with its importance as to distinguish it by her sanction. The result is well known. Sunday schools are now universally established, and have been adopted in Europe, in America, and wherever the traces of civilization are to be discerned. Their sound has gone forth into all lands, and, so long as knowledge is necessary to piety, and both constitute the grace and ornament of the young and the safeguard of society, the venerable name of Raikes will be enrolled with gratitude among the friends and benefactors of mankind.*

* The editor, once conversing with the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, the well-known secretary of the Serampore Missionary Society, on the subject of Sunday schools in connexion with that noble institution, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the latter observed, "Yes; if the Bible Society had commenced its operations earlier, its usefulness would have been comparatively limited, because the faculty of reading would not have been so generally acquired. Each institution is in the order of Providence:—God first raised up Sunday schools, and children were thereby taught to read; afterwards, when this faculty was obtained, in order that it might not be perverted to wrong ends, God raised up the Bible Society, that the best of all possible books might be put into their hands. Yes, sir," he added in his emphatic

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Oct. 11, 1785.

My dear Sir,—You began your letter with an apology for long silence, and it is now incumbent upon me to do the same; and the rather, as your kind invitation to Wargrave entitled you to a speedier answer. The truth is that I am become, if not a man of business, yet a busy man, and have been engaged almost this twelvemonth in a work that will allow of no long interruption. On this account it was impossible for me to accept your obliging summons; and, having only to tell you that I could not, it appeared to me as a matter of no great moment whether you received that intelligence soon or late.

You do me justice when you ascribe my printed epistle to you to my friendship for you; though, in fact, it was equally owing to the opinion that I have of yours for me.† Having, in one part or other of my two volumes, distinguished by name the majority of those few for whom I entertain a friendship, it seemed to me that it would be unjustifiable negligence to omit yourself; and, if I took that step without communicating to you my intention, it was only to gratify myself the more with the hope of surprising you agreeably. Poets are dangerous persons to be acquainted with, especially if a man have that in his character that promises to shine in verse. To that very circumstance it is owing that you are now figuring away in mine. For, notwithstanding what you say on the subject of honesty and friendship, that they are not splendid enough for public celebration, I must still think of them as I did before,—that there are no qualities of the mind and heart that can deserve it better. I can, at least for my own part, look round about upon the generality, and, while I see them deficient in those grand requisites of a respectable character, am not able to discover that they possess any other of value enough to atone for the want of them.

I beg that you will present my respects to Mrs. Hill, and believe me

Ever affectionately yours. W. C.

The period at which we are now arrived was marked by the renewal of an intimacy, long suspended indeed, but which neither time nor circumstances could efface from the affectionate heart of Cowper. The person to whom we allude is Lady Hesketh, a near relative of the poet, and whose name has already appeared in the early part of his history.

Their intercourse had been frequent, and endeared by reciprocal esteem in their youthful years; but the vicissitudes of life had separated them far from each other. During Cowper's long retirement, his accomplished cousin had passed some years with her husband abroad, and others, after her return, in a variety of mournful duties. She was at this time a widow, and her indelible regard for her poetical relation being agreeably stimulated by the publication of his recent works, she wrote to him, on that occasion, a very affectionate letter.

It gave rise to many from him, which we shall now introduce to the notice of the reader, because they give a minute account of their amiable author, at a very interesting period of his life; and because they reflect lustre on his character and genius in various points of view, and cannot fail to inspire the conviction that his letters are rivals to his poems, in the rare excellence of representing life and nature with graceful and endearing fidelity.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Oct. 12, 1785.

My dear Cousin,—It is no new thing with you to give pleasure. But I will venture to say that you do not often give more than you gave me this morning. When I came down to breakfast, and found upon the table a letter franked by my uncle,* and when opening that frank I found that it contained a letter from you, I said within myself—"This is just as it should be. We are all grown young again, and the days that I thought I should see no more are actually returned." You perceive, therefore, that you judged well, when you conjectured that a line from you would not be disagreeable to me. It could not be otherwise than as in fact it proved—a most agreeable surprise, for I can truly boast of an affection for you, that neither years nor interrupted intercourse have at all abated. I need only recollect how much I valued you once, and with how much cause, immediately to feel a revival of the same value; if that can be said to revive, which at the most has only been dormant for want of employment. But I slander it when I say that it has slept. A thousand times have I recollected a thousand scenes, in which our two selves have formed the whole of the drama, with the greatest pleasure; at times too when I had no reason to suppose that I should ever hear from you again.* I have

manner, "the wisdom of God is visible in both; they fit each other like hand and glove."

* Private correspondence.

† The epistle in which he commemorates his friendship for Mr. Hill begins as follows:—

"Dear Joseph—Five-and-twenty years ago—
Alas, how time escapes! 'tis even so—" &c. &c.

We add the two concluding lines, as descriptive of his person and character.

"An honest man, close button'd to the chin,
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within."

See *Poems*.

* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

laughed with you at the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, which afforded us, as you well know, a fund of merriment that deserves never to be forgot. I have walked with you to Netley Abbey, and have scrambled with you over hedges in every direction, and many other feats we have performed together upon the field of my remembrance, and all within these few years. Should I say within this twelvemonth, I should not transgress the truth. The hours that I have spent with you were among the pleasantest of my former days, and are therefore chronicled in my mind so deeply as to fear no erasure. Neither do I forget my poor friend, Sir Thomas; I should remember him indeed at any rate, on account of his personal kindness to myself, but the last testimony that he gave of his regard for you endears him to me still more. With his uncommon understanding (for with many peculiarities he had more sense than any of his acquaintance,) and with his generous sensibilities, it was hardly possible that he should not distinguish you as he has done. As it was the last, so it was the best proof that he could give of a judgment that never deceived him, when he would allow himself leisure to consult it.

You say that you have often heard of me; that puzzles me. I cannot imagine from what quarter, but it is no matter. I must tell you, however, my cousin, that your information has been a little defective. That I am happy in my situation is true; I live, and have lived these twenty years, with Mrs. Unwin, to whose affectionate care of me, during the far greater part of that time, it is, under Providence, owing that I live at all. But I do not account myself happy in having been, for thirteen of these years, in a state of mind that has made all that care and attention necessary; an attention and a care that have injured her health, and which, had she not been uncommonly supported, must have brought her to the grave. But I will pass to another subject; it would be cruel to particularize only to give pain, neither would I by any means give a sable hue to the first letter of a correspondence so unexpectedly renewed.

I am delighted with what you tell me of my uncle's good health. To enjoy any measure of cheerfulness at so late a day is much. But to have that late day enlivened with the vivacity of youth is much more, and in these postdiluvian times a rarity indeed. Happy for the most part are parents who have daughters. Daughters are not apt to outlive their natural affections, which a son has generally survived, even before his boyish years are expired. I rejoice particularly in my uncle's felicity, who has three female descendants from his little person, who leave him nothing to wish for upon that head.

My dear Cousin, dejection of spirits which (I suppose) may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual occupations do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. But composition, especially of verse, absorbs it wholly. I write therefore generally three hours in a morning, and in an evening I transcribe. I read also, but less than I write, for I must have bodily exercise, and therefore never pass a day without it.

You ask me where I have been this summer. I answer, at Olney. Should you ask me where I spent the last seventeen summers, I should still answer, at Olney. Ay, and the winters also. I have seldom left it, except when I attended my brother in his last illness; never I believe a fortnight together.

Adieu, my beloved Cousin, I shall not always be thus nimble in reply, but shall always have great pleasure in answering you when I can.

Yours, my dear friend and Cousin,
W. C.

The letters addressed to Mr. Newton by Cowper are frequently characterized by a plaintiveness of feeling that powerfully awakens the emotions of the heart. The following contains some incidental allusions of this kind.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Oct. 16, 1785.

My dear Friend,—To have sent a child to heaven is a great honor and a great blessing, and your feelings on such an occasion may well be such as render you rather an object of congratulation than of condolence. And were it otherwise, yet, having yourself free access to all the sources of genuine consolation, I feel that it would be little better than impertinence in me to suggest any. An escape from a life of suffering to a life of happiness and glory is such a deliverance as leaves no room for the sorrow of survivors, unless they sorrow for themselves. We cannot, indeed, lose what we love without regretting it; but a Christian is in possession of such alleviations of that regret as the world knows nothing of. Their beloveds, when they die, go they know not whither: and if they suppose them, as they generally do, in a state of happiness, they have yet but an indifferent prospect of joining them in that state hereafter. But it is not so with you. You both know whither your beloved is gone, and you know that you shall follow her; and

* Private correspondence.

you know also that in the meantime she is incomparably happier than yourself. So far, therefore, as she is concerned, nothing has come to pass but what was most fervently to be wished. I do not know that I am singularly selfish; but one of the first thoughts that your account of Miss Cunningham's dying moments and departure suggested to me had self for its object. It struck me that she was not born when I sank into darkness, and that she is gone to heaven before I have emerged again. What a lot, said I to myself, is mine! whose helmet is fallen from my head, and whose sword from my hand, in the midst of the battle: who was stricken down to the earth when I least expected it; who had just begun to cry victory! when I was defeated myself; and who have been trampled upon so long, that others have had time to conquer and to receive their crown, before I have been able to make one successful effort to escape from under the feet of my enemies. It seemed to me, therefore, that if you mourned for Miss Cunningham you gave those tears to her to which I only had a right, and I was almost ready to exclaim, "I am the dead, and not she; you misplace your sorrows." I have sent you the history of my mind on this subject without any disguise; if it does not please you, pardon it at least, for it is the truth. The unhappy, I believe, are always selfish. I have, I confess, my comfortable moments; but they are like the morning dew, so suddenly do they pass away and are gone.

It should seem a matter of small moment to me, who never hear him, whether Mr. Scott shall be removed from Olney to the Lock, or no; yet, in fact, I believe, that few interest themselves more in that event than I. He knows my manner of life, and has ceased long since to wonder at it. A new minister would need information, and I am not ambitious of having my tale told to a stranger. He would also perhaps think it necessary to assail me with arguments, which would be more profitably disposed of, if he should discharge them against the walls of a tower. I wish, therefore, for the continuance of Mr. Scott. He honored me so far as to consult me twice upon the subject. At our first interview, he seemed to discern but little in the proposal that entitled it to his approbation. But, when he came the second time, we observed that his views of it were considerably altered. He was warm—he was animated; difficulties had disappeared, and allurements had started up in their place. I could not say to him, Sir, you are naturally of a sanguine temper; and he that is so cannot too much distrust his own judgment;—but I am glad that he will have the benefit of yours. It seems to me, however, that the minister who shall re-illumine the faded glories of the Lock must not only practise great fidelity in his preaching, to which task Mr. Scott is perfectly equal, but must do it with much address; and it is hardly worth while to observe that his excellence does not lie that way, because he is ever ready to acknowledge it himself. But I have nothing to suggest upon this subject that will be new to you, and therefore drop it; the rather, indeed, because I may reasonably suppose that by this time the point is decided.

I have reached that part of my paper which I generally fill with intelligence, if I can find any: but there is a great dearth of it at present; and Mr. Scott has probably anticipated me in all the little that there is. Lord P—— having dismissed Mr. Jones from his service, the people of Turvey* have burnt him [Mr. Jones] in effigy, with a bundle of quick-thorn† under his arm. What consequences are to follow his dismission is uncertain. His lordship threatens him with a lawsuit; and, unless their disputes can be settled by arbitration, it is not unlikely that the profits of poor Jones's stewardship will be melted down at Westminster. He has labored hard, and no doubt with great integrity, and has been rewarded with hard words and scandalous treatment.

Mr. Scott (which perhaps he may not have told you, for he did not mention it here) has met with similar treatment at a place in this country called Hinksey, or by some such name.‡ But he suffered in effigy for the Gospel's sake;—a cause in which I presume he would not be unwilling, if need were, to be burnt *in propriâ personâ*.

I have nothing to add, but that we are well, and remember you with much affection; and that I am, my dear friend,

Sincerely yours, W. C.

The following letters communicate various interesting particulars respecting Cowper's laborious undertaking, the new version of Homer's Iliad.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Oct. 22, 1785.

My dear William,—You might well suppose that your letter had miscarried, though in fact it was duly received. I am not often so long in arrear, and you may assure yourself that when at any time it happens that I

* The Peterborough family had formerly a mansion and large estate in the parish of Turvey. It is mentioned in Camden's Britannia, so far back as in the time of Henry VIII. There are some marble monuments in the parish church, executed with great magnificence, and in high preservation, recording the heroes of foreign times belonging to that ancient but now extinct race.

† The dispute originated respecting the enclosure of the parish; and, as this act was unpopular with the poor, the bundle of quick-thorn was intended to be expressive of their indignant feelings.

‡ The proper name of the place is Tingewick.

am so, neither neglect nor idleness is the cause. I have, as you well know, a daily occupation, forty lines to translate, a task which I never excuse myself, when it is possible to perform it. Equally sedulous I am in the matter of transcribing, so that between both my morning and evening are most part completely engaged. Add to this that, though my spirits are seldom so bad but I can write verse, they are often at so low an ebb as to make the production of a letter impossible. So much for a trespass, which called for some apology, but for which to apologize further would be a greater trespass still.

I am now in the twentieth book of Homer, and shall assuredly proceed, because the further I go the more I find myself justified in the undertaking; and in due time, if I live, shall assuredly publish. In the whole I shall have composed about forty thousand verses, about which forty thousand verses I shall have taken great pains, on no occasion suffering a slovenly line to escape me. I leave you to guess therefore whether, such a labor once achieved, I shall not determine to turn it to some account, and to gain myself profit if I can, if not at least some credit for my reward.

I perfectly approve of your course with John. The most entertaining books are best to begin with, and none in the world, so far as entertainment is concerned, deserves the preference to Homer. Neither do I know that there is anywhere to be found Greek of easier construction—poetical Greek I mean; and as for prose, I should recommend Xenophon's Cyropædia. That also is a most amusing narrative, and ten times easier to understand than the crabbed epigrams and scribblements of the minor poets that are generally put into the hands of boys. I took particular notice of the neatness of John's Greek character, which (let me tell you) deserves its share of commendation; for to write the language legibly is not the lot of every man who can read it. Witness myself for one.

I like the little ode of Huntingford's that you sent me. In such matters we do not expect much novelty, or much depth of thought. The expression is all in all, which to me at least appears to be faultless.

Adieu, my dear William! We are well, and you and yours are ever the objects of our affection. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Nov. 5, 1785.

My dear Friend,—Were it with me as in days past, you should have no cause to complain of my tardiness in writing. You supposed that I would have accepted your packet as an answer to my last; and so indeed I did, and felt myself overpaid; but, though a debtor, and deeply indebted too, had not wherewithal to discharge the arrear. You do not know nor suspect what a conquest I sometimes gain, when I only take up the pen with a design to write. Many a time have I resolved to say to all my few correspondents,—I take my leave of you for the present; if I live to see better days, you shall hear from me again.—I have been driven to the very verge of this measure; and even upon this occasion was upon the point of desiring Mrs. Unwin to become my substitute. She indeed offered to write in my stead; but, fearing that you would understand me to be even worse than I am, I rather chose to answer for myself.—So much for a subject with which I could easily fill the sheet, but with which I have occupied too great a part of it already. It is time that I should thank you, and return you Mrs. Unwin's thanks for your Narrative.* I told you in my last in what manner I felt myself affected by the abridgement of it contained in your letter; and have therefore only to add, upon that point, that the impression made upon me by the relation at large was of a like kind. I envy all that live in the enjoyment of a good hope, and much more all who die to enjoy the fruit of it: but I recollect myself in time; I resolved not to touch that chord again, and yet was just going to trespass upon my resolution. As to the rest, your history of your happy niece is just what it should be,—clear, affectionate, and plain; worthy of her, and worthy of yourself. How much more beneficial to the world might such a memorial of an unknown, but pious and believing child eventually prove, would the supercilious learned condescend to read it, than the history of all the kings and heroes that ever lived! But the world has its objects of admiration, and God has objects of his love. Those make a noise and perish; and these weep silently for a short season, and live forever. I had rather have been your neice, or the writer of her story, than any Cæsar that ever thundered.

The vanity of human attainments was never so conspicuously exemplified as in the present day. The sagacious moderns make discoveries, which, how useful they may prove to themselves I know not; certainly they do no honor to the ancients. Homer and Virgil have enjoyed (if the dead have any such enjoyments) an unrivalled reputation as poets, through a long succession of ages; but it is now shrewdly suspected that Homer did not compose the poems for which he has been so long applauded;† and it is even as-

* Private correspondence.

* The narrative of Miss Eliza Cunningham's last illness and happy death.

† In the Prolegomena to Villoisson's Iliad it is stated, that Pisistratus, in collecting the works of Homer, was imposed upon by spurious imitations of the Grecian bard's style; and that not suspecting the fraud, he was

serted by a certain Robert Heron, Esq., that Virgil never wrote a line worth reading. He is a pitiful plagiary; he is a servile imitator, a bungler in his plan, and has not a thought in his whole work that will bear examination. In short, he is anything but what the literati for two thousand years have taken him to be—a man of genius and a fine writer. I fear that Homer's case is desperate. After the lapse of so many generations, it would be a difficult matter to elucidate a question which time and modern ingenuity together combine to puzzle. And I suppose that it were in vain for an honest plain man to inquire, if Homer did not write the Iliad and Odyssey, who did? The answer would undoubtedly be—it is no matter; he did not: which is all that I undertook to prove. For Virgil, however, there still remains some consolation. The very same Mr. Heron, who finds no beauties in the Æneid, discovers not a single instance of the sublime in Scripture. Particularly he says, speaking of the prophets, that Ezekiel, although the filthiest of all writers, is the best of them. He therefore, being the first of the learned who has reprobated even the style of the Scriptures, may possibly make the fewer proselytes to his judgment of the Heathen writer. For my own part at least, had I been accustomed to doubt whether the Æneid were a noble composition or not, this gentleman would at once have decided the question for me: and I should have been immediately assured that a work must necessarily abound in beauties that had the happiness to displease a censurer of the Word of God. What enterprises will not an inordinate passion for fame suggest? It prompted one man to fire the Temple of Ephesus; another, to fling himself into a volcano; and now has induced this wicked and unfortunate Squire either to deny his own feelings, or to publish to all the world that he has no feelings at all.*

Mr. Scott is pestered with anonymous letters, but he conducts himself wisely; and the question whether he shall go to the Lock or not, seems hasting to a decision in the affirmative.

We are tolerably well; and Mrs. Unwin adds to mine her affectionate remembrances of yourself and Mrs. Newton.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

The work of Mr. Heron is entitled, "Letters on Literature," in which he spares neither things sacred nor profane. The author seems to be a man of talent, but it is talent painfully misapplied. After calling Virgil a servile imitator of Homer, and indulging in various critiques, he thus concludes his animadversions. "Such is the Æneid, which the author, with good reason, on his death-bed, condemned to the flames; and, had it suffered that fate, real poetry would have lost nothing by it. I have said that, notwithstanding all, Virgil deserves his fame; for his fame is now confined to schools and academies; and his style (the pickle that has preserved his mummy from corruption) is pure and exquisite."

Wit, employed at the expense of taste and sound judgment, can neither advance the reputation of its author, nor promote the cause of true literature. This supercilious treatment of the noble productions of classic genius too much resembles that period in the literary history of France, when the question was agitated (with Perrault at its head) as to the relative superiority of the ancients or moderns. It was at that time fashionable with one of the contending parties to decry the pretensions of the ancients. One of their writers exclaims,

"Dépouillons ces respects serviles
Que nous portons aux temps passés.
Les Homères et les Virgiles
Peuvent *encore être effacés*."—La Motte.

We trust that this corrupt spirit will never infect the Lyceums of British literature; but that they will be reserved ever to be the sanctuaries of high-taught genius, chastened by a refined and discriminating taste, and embellished with the graces of a simple and noble eloquence, formed on the pure models of classic antiquity.

ted to incorporate them as the genuine productions of Homer.

Cowper justly ridicules an extravagant a supposition.

* The playful spirit in which the writer adverts to this subject appears to have yielded afterwards to a feeling of indignation: the following lines in his own handwriting having been found by Dr. Johnson amongst his papers:—

ON THE AUTHOR OF LETTERS ON LITERATURE.

The Genius of th' Augustan age
His head among Rome's ruins rear'd;
And, bursting with heroic rage,
When literary Heron appear'd,
Thou hast, he cried, like him of old
Who set th' Ephesian dome on fire,
By being scandalously bold,
Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

And for traducing Virgil's name
Shalt share his merited reward;
A perpetuity of fame,
That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Olney, Nov. 7, 1785.

My dear Friend,—Your time being so much occupied as to leave you no opportunity for a word more than the needful, I am the more obliged to you that you have found leisure even for that, and thank you for the note above acknowledged.

I know not at present what subject I could enter upon, by which I should not put you to an expense of moments that you can

* Private correspondence.

ill spare: I have often been displeased when a neighbor of mine, being himself an idle man, has delivered himself from the burden of a vacant hour or two, by coming to repose his idleness upon me. Not to incur therefore, and deservedly, the blame that I have charged upon him, by interrupting you, who are certainly a busy man, whatever may be the case with myself, I shall only add that I am, with my respects to Mrs. Hill,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

The tried stability of Cowper's friendship, after a long interval of separation, and the delicacy with which he accepts Lady Hesketh's offer of pecuniary aid, are here depicted in a manner that reflects honor on both parties.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Nov. 9, 1785.

My dearest Cousin,—Whose last most affectionate letter has run in my head ever since I received it, and which I now sit down to answer, two days sooner than the post will serve me. I thank you for it, and with a warmth for which I am sure you will give me credit, though I do not spend many words in describing it. I do not seek *new* friends, not being altogether sure that I should find them, but have unspeakable pleasure in being still beloved by an old one. I hope that now our correspondence has suffered its last interruption, and that we shall go down together to the grave, chatting and chirping as merrily as such a scene of things as this will permit.

I am happy that my poems have pleased you. My volume has afforded me no such pleasure at any time, either while I was writing it or since its publication, as I have derived from yours and my uncle's opinion of it. I make certain allowances for partiality, and for that peculiar quickness of taste with which you both relish what you like, and, after all drawbacks upon those accounts duly made, find myself rich in the measure of your approbation that still remains. But, above all, I honor John Gilpin, since it was he who first encouraged you to write. I made him on purpose to laugh at, and he served his purpose well; but I am now indebted to him for a more valuable acquisition than all the laughter in the world amounts to, the recovery of my intercourse with you, which is to me inestimable. My benevolent and generous cousin, when I was once asked if I wanted anything, and given delicately to understand that the inquirer was ready to supply all my occasions, I thankfully and civilly, but positively declined the favor. I neither suffer, nor have suffered, any such inconveniences as I had not much rather endure than come under obligations of that sort to a person comparatively with yourself a stranger to me. But to you I answer otherwise. I know you thoroughly, and the liberality of your disposition, and have that consummate confidence in the sincerity of your wish to serve me, that delivers me from all awkward constraint, and from all fear of trespassing by acceptance. To you, therefore, I reply, yes. Whensoever and whatsoever, and in what manner soever you please; and add moreover that my affection for the giver is such as will increase to me tenfold the satisfaction that I shall have in receiving. It is necessary, however, I should let you a little into the state of my finances, that you may not suppose them more narrowly circumscribed than they are. Since Mrs. Unwin and I have lived at Olney, we have had but one purse, although during the whole time, till lately, her income was nearly double mine. Her revenues indeed are now in some measure reduced, and not much exceed my own; the worst consequence of this is, that we are forced to deny ourselves some things which hitherto we have been better able to afford, but they are such things as neither life, nor the well-being of life, depend upon. My own income has been better than it is, but when it was best, it would not have enabled me to live as my connexions demanded that I should, had it not been combined with a better than itself, at least at this end of the kingdom. Of this I had full proof during three months that I spent in lodgings at Huntingdon, in which time, by the help of good management and a clear notion of economical matters, I contrived to spend the income of a twelvemonth. Now, my beloved cousin, you are in possession of the whole case as it stands. Strain no points to your own inconvenience or hurt, for there is no need of it, but indulge yourself in communicating (no matter what) that you can spare without missing it, since by so doing, you will be sure to add to the comforts of my life one of the sweetest that I can enjoy—a token and proof of your affection.

In the affair of my next publication,* toward which you also offer me so kindly your assistance, there will be no need that you should help me in the manner that you propose. It will be a large work, consisting I should imagine of six volumes at least. The 12th of this month I shall have spent a year upon it, and it will cost me more than another. I do not love the booksellers well enough to make them a present of such a labor, but intend to publish by subscription. Your vote and interest, my dear cousin, upon the occasion, if you please, but nothing more! I will trouble you with some papers of pro-

* His translation of Homer's Iliad.

posals when the time shall come, and am sure that you will circulate as many for me as you can. Now, my dear, I am going to tell you a secret. It is a great secret, that you must not whisper even to your cat. No creature is at this moment apprized of it but Mrs. Unwin and her son. I am making a new translation of Homer, and am on the point of finishing the twenty-first book of the Iliad. The reasons upon which I undertake this Herculean labor, and by which I justify an enterprise in which I seem so effectually anticipated by Pope, although in fact he has not anticipated me at all, I may possibly give you, if you wish for them, when I can find nothing more interesting to say. A period which I do not conceive to be very near! I have not answered many things in your letter, nor can do it at present for want of room. I cannot believe but that I should know you, notwithstanding all that time may have done. There is not a feature of your face, could I meet it upon the road by itself, that I should not instantly recollect. I should say, that is my cousin's nose, or those are her lips and her chin, and no woman upon earth can claim them but herself. As for me, I am a very smart youth of my years. I am not indeed grown gray so much as I am grown bald. No matter. There was more hair in the world than ever had the honor to belong to me. Accordingly having found just enough to curl a little at my ears, and to intermix with a little of my own that still hangs behind, I appear, if you see me in an afternoon, to have a very decent head-dress, not easily distinguished from my natural growth, which being worn with a small bag, and a black riband about my neck, continues to me the charms of my youth even on the verge of age. Away with the fear of writing too often. W. C.

P. S.—That the view I give you of myself may be complete I add the two following items—That I am in debt to nobody, and that I grow fat.

There is no date to the following letter, but it evidently refers to this period of time.

TO LADY HESKETH.

My dearest Cousin,—I am glad that I always loved you as I did. It releases me from any occasion to suspect that my present affection for you is indebted for its existence to any selfish considerations. No, I am sure I love you disinterestedly and for your own sake, because I never thought of you with any other sensations than those of the truest affection, even while I was under the persuasion that I should never hear from you again. But, with my present feelings superadded to those that I always had for you, I find it no easy matter to do justice to my sensations. I perceive myself in a state of mind similar to that of the traveller described in Pope's Messiah, who, as he passes through a sandy desert, starts at the sudden and unexpected sound of a waterfall.* You have placed me in a situation new to me, and in which I feel myself somewhat puzzled how to behave. At the same time I would not grieve you by putting a check upon your bounty, I would be as careful not to abuse it, as if I were a miser, and the question not about your money but my own.

Although I do not suspect that a secret to you, my cousin, is any burden, yet, having maturely considered that point since I wrote my last, I feel myself altogether disposed to release you from the injunction to that effect under which I laid you. I have now made such a progress in my translation that I need neither fear that I shall stop short of the end, nor that any other rider of Pegasus should overtake me. Therefore, if at any time it should fall fairly in your way, or you should feel yourself invited to say I am so occupied, you have my poetship's free permission. Dr. Johnson read and recommended my first volume. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.†

Olney, Nov. 9, 1785.

My dear Friend,—You desired me to return your good brother the bishop's Charge,‡ as soon as I conveniently could, and the weather having forbidden us to hope for the pleasure of seeing you and Mrs. Bagot with you this morning, I return it now, lest, as you told me that your stay in this country would be short, you should be gone before it could reach you.

I wish as you do, that the Charge in question could find its way into all the parsonages in the nation. It is so generally applicable, and yet so pointedly enforced, that it deserves the most extensive spread. I find in it the happiest mixture of spiritual authority, the meekness of a Christian, and the good manners of a gentleman. It has convinced me that the poet who, like myself, shall take the liberty to pay the author of such valuable admonition a compliment, shall do at least as much honor to himself as to his subject.

Yours, W. C.

* The following is the passage alluded to:—

"The swain in barren deserts with surprise
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise:
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds, to hear
New falls of water murm'ring in his ear."
Pope's Messiah, line 67, &c.

† Cowper was at Westminster school with five brothers of this name. He retained through life the friendship of the estimable character to whom this letter is addressed.

‡ Lewis Bagot, D.D. He was formerly Dean of Christ Church, Oxford; afterwards Bishop of Norwich, and finally Bishop of St. Asaph.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 3, 1785.

My dear Friend,—I am glad to hear that there is such a demand for your last Narrative. If I may judge of their general utility by the effect that they have heretofore had upon me, there are few things more edifying than death-bed memoirs. They interest every reader, because they speak of a period at which all must arrive, and afford a solid ground of encouragement to survivors to expect the same, or similar, support and comfort, when it shall be their turn to die.

I also am employed in writing narrative, but not so useful. Employment, however, and with the pen, is through habit become essential to my well-being; and to produce always original poems, especially of considerable length, is not so easy. For some weeks after I had finished "The Task," and sent away the last sheet corrected, I was through necessity idle, and suffered not a little in my spirits for being so. One day, being in such distress of mind as was hardly supportable, I took up the Iliad; and, merely to divert attention, and with no more preconception of what I was then entering upon than I have at this moment of what I shall be doing this day twenty years hence, translated the twelve first lines of it. The same necessity pressing me again, I had recourse to the same expedient and translated more. Every day bringing its occasion for employment with it, every day consequently added something to the work; till at last I began to reflect thus:—The Iliad and the Odyssey together consist of about forty thousand verses. To translate these forty thousand verses will furnish me with occupation for a considerable time. I have already made some progress, and I find it a most agreeable amusement. Homer, in point of purity is a most blameless writer; and though he was not an enlightened man, has interspersed many great and valuable truths throughout both his poems. In short, he is in all respects a most venerable old gentleman, by an acquaintance with whom no man can disgrace himself. The literati are all agreed to a man that, although Pope has given us two pretty poems under Homer's titles, there is not to be found in them the least portion of Homer's spirit, nor the least resemblance of his manner. I will try therefore whether I cannot copy him somewhat more happily myself. I have at least the advantage of Pope's faults and failings, which, like so many buoys upon a dangerous coast, will serve me to steer by, and will make my chance for success more probable. These and many other considerations, but especially a mind that abhorred a vacuum as its chief bane, impelled me so effectually to the work, that ere long I mean to publish proposals for a subscription to it, having advanced so far as to be warranted in doing so. I have connexions, and no few such, by means of which I have the utmost reason to expect that a brisk circulation may be procured; and if it should prove a profitable enterprise, the profit will not accrue to a man who may be said not to want it. It is a business such as it will not indeed lie much in your way to promote; but among your numerous connexions it is possible that you may know some who would sufficiently interest themselves in such a work to be not unwilling to subscribe to it. I do not mean—far be it from me—to put you upon making hazardous applications, where you might possibly incur a refusal, that would give you though but a moment's pain. You know best your own opportunities and powers in such a cause. If you can do but little, I shall esteem it much; and if you can do nothing, I am sure that it will not be for want of a will.

I have lately had three visits from my old schoolfellow Mr. Bagot, a brother of Lord Bagot, and of Mr. Chester of Chicheley. At his last visit he brought his wife with him, a most amiable woman, to see Mrs. Unwin. I told him my purpose and my progress. He received the news with great pleasure; immediately subscribed a draft of twenty pounds; and promised me his whole heart, and his whole interest, which lies principally among people of the first fashion.

My correspondence has lately also been renewed with my dear cousin, Lady Hesketh, whom I ever loved as a sister. (for we were in a manner brought up together,) and who writes to me as affectionately as if she were so. She also enters into my views and interests upon this occasion with a warmth that gives me great encouragement. The circle of *her* acquaintance is likewise very extensive; and I have no doubt that she will exert her influence to its utmost possibilities among them. I have other strings to my bow, (perhaps, as a translator of Homer, I should say, to my lyre,) which I cannot here enumerate; but, upon the whole, my prospect seems promising enough. I have not yet consulted Johnson upon the occasion, but intend to do it soon.

My spirits are somewhat better than they were. In the course of the last month, I have perceived a very sensible amendment. The hope of better days seems again to dawn upon me: and I have now and then an intimation, though slight and transient, that God has not abandoned me forever.

Having been for some years troubled with an inconvenient stomach; and lately with a stomach that will digest nothing without

* Private correspondence.

help; and we having reached the bottom of our own medical skill into which we have dived to little or no purpose; I have at length consented to consult Dr. Kerr, and expect to see him in a day or two. Engaged as I am and am likely to be, so long as I am capable of it, in writing for the press, I cannot well afford to entertain a malady that is such an enemy to all mental operations.

This morning is beautiful, and tempts me forth into the garden. It is all the walk that I can have at this season, but not all the exercise. I ring a peal every day upon the dumbbells.

I am, my dear friend, most truly,
Yours and Mrs. Newton's, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Dec. 10, 1785.

My dear Friend.—What you say of my last volume gives me the sincerest pleasure. I have heard a like favorable report of it from several different quarters, but never any (for obvious reasons) that has gratified me more than yours. I have a relish for moderate praise, because it bids fair to be judicious; but praise excessive, such as our poor friend ——'s, (I have an uncle also who celebrates me exactly in the same language,)—such praise is rather too big for an ordinary swallow. I set down nine-tenths of it to the account of family partiality. I know no more than you what kind of a market my book has found; but this I believe, that had not Henderson died,† and had it been worth my while to have given him a hundred pounds to have read it in public, it would have been more popular than it is. I am at least very unwilling to esteem John Gilpin as better worth than all the rest that I have written, and he has been popular enough.

Your sentiments of Pope's Homer agree perfectly with those of every competent judge with whom I have at any time conversed about it. I never saw a copy so unlike the original. There is not I believe in all the world to be found an uninspired poem so simple as those of Homer, nor in all the world a poem more bedizened with ornaments than Pope's translation of them. Accordingly, the sublime of Homer in the hands of Pope becomes bloated and tumid, and his description tawdry. Neither had Pope the faintest conception of those exquisite discriminations of character for which Homer is so remarkable. All his persons, and equally upon all occasions, speak in an inflated and strutting phraseology as Pope has managed them; although in the original the dignity of their utterance, even when they are most majestic, consists principally in the simplicity of their sentiments and of their language. Another censure I must needs pass upon our Anglo-Grecian, out of many that obtrude themselves upon me, but for which I have neither time to spare, nor room, which is, that with all his great abilities he was defective in his feelings to a degree that some passages in his own poems make it difficult to account for. No writer more pathetic than Homer, because none more natural; and because none less natural than Pope in his version of Homer, therefore than he none less pathetic. But I shall tire you with a theme with which I would not wish to cloy you beforehand.

If the great change in my experience, of which you express so lively an expectation, should take place, and whenever it shall take place, you may securely depend upon receiving the first notice of it. But, whether you come with congratulations, or whether without them, I need not say that you and yours will always be most welcome here. Mrs. Unwin's love both to yourself and to Mrs. Newton joins itself as usual, and as warmly as usual, to that of

Yours, my dear friend,
Affectionately and faithfully, W. C.

The following this moment occurs to me as a possible motto for the Messiah, if you do not think it too sharp:—

——Nunquam inducunt animum cantare, *rogati*;
Injussi, nunquam desistunt.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Dec. 24, 1785.

My dear Friend,—You would have found a letter from me at Mr. ——'s, according to your assignation, had not the post, setting out two hours sooner than the usual time, prevented me. The Odyssey that you sent has but one fault, at least but one that I have discovered, which is that I cannot read it. The very attempt, if persevered in, would soon make me as blind as Homer was himself. I am now in the last book of the Iliad, shall be obliged to you therefore for a more legible one by the first opportunity.

I wrote to Johnson lately, desiring him to give me advice and information on the subject of proposals for a subscription, and he desired me in his answer not to use that mode of publication, but to treat with him, adding that he could make me such offers as (he believed) I should approve. I have replied to his letter, but abide by my first purpose.

Having occasion to write to Mr. ——,* con-

* Private correspondence.

† A public reciter, well known in his day, who delivered his recitations with all the effect of tone, emphasis, and graceful elocution.

* John Thornton, Esq.

eerning his princely benevolence, extended this year also to the poor of Olney, I put in a good word for my poor self likewise, and have received a very obliging and encouraging answer. He promises me six names in particular, that (he says) will do me no discredit, and expresses a wish to be served with papers as soon as they shall be printed.

I meet with encouragement from all quarters, such as I find need of indeed in an enterprise of such length and moment, but such as at the same time I find effectual. Homer is not a poet to be translated under the disadvantage of doubts and dejection.

Let me sing the praises of the desk which —— has sent me. In general it is as elegant as possible. In particular it is of cedar beautifully lacquered. When put together, it assumes the form of a handsome small chest, and contains all sorts of accommodations; it is inlaid with ivory, and serves the purpose of a reading desk.*

Your affectionate W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Dec. 24, 1785.

My dear Friend,—Till I had made such a progress in my present undertaking as to put it out of all doubt that, if I lived, I should proceed in and finish it, I kept the matter to myself. It would have done me little honor to have told my friends that I had an arduous enterprise in hand, if afterwards I must have told them that I had dropped it. Knowing it to have been universally the opinion of the literati, ever since they have allowed themselves to consider the matter coolly, that a translation, properly so called, of Homer is, notwithstanding what Pope has done, a desideratum in the English language: it struck me that an attempt to supply the deficiency would be an honorable one, and having made myself, in former years, somewhat critically a master of the original, I was by this double consideration induced to make the attempt myself. I am now translating into blank verse the last book of the Iliad, and mean to publish by subscription. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Dec. 31, 1785.

My dear William,—You have learned from my last that I am now conducting myself upon the plan that you recommended to me in the summer. But since I wrote it I have made still farther advances in my negociation with Johnson. The proposals are adjusted. The proof-sheet has been printed off, corrected, and returned. They will be sent abroad, as soon as I make up a complete list of the personages and persons to whom I would have them sent, which in a few days I hope to be able to accomplish. Johnson behaves very well, at least according to my conception of the matter, and seems sensible that I dealt liberally with him. He wishes me to be a gainer by my labors, in his own words, "to put something handsome into my pocket," and recommends two large quartos for the whole. He would not, he says, by any means advise an extravagant price, and has fixed it at three guineas, the half, as usual, to be paid at the time of subscribing, the remainder on delivery. Five hundred names, he adds, at this price will put above a thousand pounds into my purse. I am doing my best to obtain them. Mr. Newton is warm in my service, and can do not a little. I have of course written to Mr. Bagot, who, when he was here, with much earnestness and affection intreated me so to do as soon as I could have settled the conditions. If I could get Sir Richard Sutton's address, I would write to him also, though I have been but once in his company since I left Westminster, where he and I read the Iliad and Odyssey through together. I enclose Lord Dartmouth's answer to my application, which I will get you to show to Lady Hesketh, because it will please her. I shall be glad if you can make an opportunity to call on her during your present stay in town. You observe therefore that I am not wanting to myself. He that is so has no just claim on the assistance of others, neither shall myself have cause to complain of me in other respects. I thank you for your friendly hints and precautions, and shall not fail to give them the guidance of my pen. I respect the public and I respect myself, and had rather want bread than expose myself wantonly to the condemnation of either. I hate the affectation, so frequently found in authors, of negligence and slovenly slightness, and in the present case am sensible how necessary it is to shun them, when I undertake the vast and invidious labor of doing better than Pope has done before me. I thank you for all that you have said and done in my cause, and beforehand for all that you shall do and say hereafter. I am sure that there will be no deficiency on your part. In particular I thank you for taking such jealous care of my honor, and respectability, when the man you mentioned applied for samples of my translation. When I deal in wine, cloth, or cheese, I will give samples, but of verse never. No consideration would have induced me to comply with the gentleman's demand, unless he could have assured me that his wife had longed.

I have frequently thought with pleasure of

* This interesting relic was bequeathed to Dr. Johnson, and is now in the possession of his family. It was presented to Cowper by Lady Hesketh.

the summer that you have had in your heart, while you have been employed in softening the severity of winter in behalf of so many who must otherwise have been exposed to it. I wish that you could make a general gaol-delivery, leaving only those behind who cannot elsewhere be so properly disposed of. You never said a better thing in your life than when you assured Mr. —— of the expedience of a gift of bedding to the poor of Olney. There is no one article of this world's comforts with which, as Falstaff says, they are so heinously unprovided. When a poor woman, and an honest one, whom we know well, carried home two pair of blankets, a pair for herself and husband, and a pair for her six children; as soon as the children saw them, they jumped out of their straw, caught them in their arms, kissed them, blessed them, and danced for joy. An old woman, a very old one, the first night that she found herself so comfortably covered, could not sleep a wink, being kept awake by the contrary emotions of transport on the one hand, and the fear of not being thankful enough on the other.

It just occurs to me to say that this manuscript of mine will be ready for the press, as I hope, by the end of February. I shall have finished the Iliad, in about ten days, and shall proceed immediately to the revisal of the whole. You must if possible come down to Olney, if it be only that you may take charge of its safe delivery to Johnson. For, if by any accident it should be lost, I am undone—the first copy being but a lean counterpart of the second.

Your mother joins with me in love and good wishes of every kind to you and all yours.

Adieu, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Jan. 10, 1786.

It gave me great pleasure that you found my friend Unwin, what I was sure you would find him, a most agreeable man. I did not usher him in with the marrow-bones and cleavers of high-sounding panegyric, both because I was certain that, whatsoever merit he had, your discernment would mark it, and because it is possible to do a man material injury by making his praise his harbinger. It is easy to raise expectation to such a pitch that the reality, be it ever so excellent, must necessarily fall below it.

I hold myself much indebted to Mr. ——, of whom I have the first information from yourself, both for his friendly disposition towards me, and for the manner in which he marks the defects in my volume. An author must be tender indeed to wince on being touched so gently. It is undoubtedly as he says, and as you and my uncle say, you cannot be all mistaken, neither is it at all probable that any of you should be so. I take it for granted, therefore, that there are inequalities in the composition, and I do assure you, my dear, most faithfully, that, if it should reach a second edition, I will spare no pains to improve it. It may serve me for an agreeable amusement perhaps when Homer shall be gone, and done with. The first edition of poems has generally been susceptible of improvement. Pope I believe never published one in his life that did not undergo variations, and his longest pieces many. I will only observe that inequalities there must be always, and in every work of length. There are level parts of every subject, parts which we cannot with propriety attempt to elevate. They are by nature humble, and can only be made to assume an awkward and uncouth appearance by being mounted. But again I take it for granted that this remark does not apply to the matter of your objection. You were sufficiently aware of it before, and have no need that I should suggest it as an apology, could it have served that office, but would have made it for me yourself. In truth, my dear, had you known in what anguish of mind I wrote the whole of that poem, and under what perpetual interruptions from a cause that has since been removed, so that sometimes I had not an opportunity of writing more than three lines at a sitting, you would long since have wondered as much as I do myself that it turned out anything better than Grub-street.

My cousin, give yourself no trouble to find out any of the magi to scrutinize my Homer. I can do without them; and, if I were not conscious that I have no need of their help, I would be the first to call for it. Assure yourself that I intend to be careful to the utmost line of all possible caution, both with respect to language and versification. I will not send a verse to the press that shall not have undergone the strictest examination.

A subscription is surely on every account the most eligible mode of publication. When I shall have emptied the purses of my friends and of their friends into my own, I am still free to levy contributions upon the world at large, and I shall then have a fund to defray the expenses of a new edition. I have ordered Johnson to print the proposals immediately, and hope that they will kiss your hands before the week is expired.

I have had the kindest letter from Josephus that I ever had. He mentioned my purpose to one of the masters of Eton, who replied, that "such a work is much wanted."

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Jan. 14, 1786.

My dear William,—I am glad that you have seen Lady Hesketh. I knew that you would find her everything that is amiable and elegant. Else, being my relation, I would never have shown her to you. She was also delighted with her visitor, and expects the greatest pleasure in seeing you again; but is under some apprehensions that a tender regard for the drum of your ear may keep you from her. Never mind! You have two drums, and if she should crack both, I will buy you a trumpet.

General Cowper having much pressed me to accompany my proposals with a specimen, I have sent him one. It is taken from the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad, and is part of the interview between Priam and Achilles. Tell me, if it be possible for any man to tell me—why did Homer leave off at the burial of Hector? Is it possible, that he could be determined to it by a conceit so little worthy of him as that, having made the number of his books completely the alphabetical number, he would not for the joke's sake proceed any further? Why did he not give us the death of Achilles, with the destruction of Troy? Tell me also if the critics, with Aristotle at their head, have not found that he left off exactly where he should, and that every epic poem to all generations is bound to conclude with the burial of Hector? I do not in the least doubt it. Therefore if I live to write a dozen epic poems, I will always take care to bury Hector, and to bring all matters at that point to an immediate conclusion.

I had a truly kind letter from Mr. ——, written immediately on his recovery from the fever. I am bound to honor James's powder, not only for the services it has often rendered to myself, but still more for having been the means of preserving a life ten times more valuable to society than mine is ever likely to be.

You say, "Why should I trouble you with my troubles?" I answer, "Why not? What is a friend good for, if we may not lay one end of the sack upon his shoulders, while we ourselves carry the other?"

You see your duty to God, and your duty to your neighbor, and you practise both with your best ability. Yet a certain person accounts you blind. I would, that all the world were so blind even as you are. But there are some in it who, like the Chinese, say, "We have two eyes; and other nations have but one!" I am glad however that in your one eye you have sight enough to discover that such censures are not worth minding.

I thank you heartily for every step you take in the advancement of my present purpose.

Contrive to pay Lady H. a long visit, for she has a thousand things to say.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Jan. 14, 1786.

My dear Friend,—My proposals are already printed. I ought rather to say that they are ready for printing; having near ten days ago returned the correction of the proof. But a cousin of mine, and one who will I dare say be very active in my literary cause, (I mean General Cowper,) having earnestly recommended it to me to annex a specimen, I have accordingly sent him one, extracted from the latter part of the last book of the Iliad, and consisting of a hundred and seven lines. I chose to extract it from that part of the poem, because if the reader should happen to find himself content with it, he will naturally be encouraged by it to hope well of the part preceding. Every man who can do anything in the translating way is pretty sure to set off with spirit; but in works of such a length, there is always danger of flagging near the close.

My subscription I hope will be more powerfully promoted than subscriptions generally are. I have a warm and affectionate friend in Lady Hesketh; and one equally disposed, and even still more able to serve me, in the General above mentioned. The Bagot family all undertake my cause with ardor; and I have several others, of whose ability and good will I could not doubt without doing them injustice. It will however be necessary to bestow yet much time on the revisal of this work, for many reasons; and especially, because he who contends with Pope upon Homer's ground can of all writers least afford to be negligent.

Mr. Scott brought me as much as he could remember of a kind message from Lord Dartmouth; but it was rather imperfectly delivered. Enough of it however came to hand to convince me that his lordship takes a friendly interest in my success. When his lordship and I sat side by side, on the sixth form at Westminster, we little thought that in process of time one of us was ordained to give a new translation of Homer. Yet at that very time it seems I was laying the foundation of this superstructure.

Much love upon all accounts to you and yours.

Adieu, my friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, Jan. 15, 1786.

My dear Friend,—I have just time to give

* Private correspondence.

you a hasty line to explain to you the delay that the publication of my proposals has unexpectedly encountered, and at which I suppose that you have been somewhat surprised.

I have a near relation in London, and a warm friend in General Cowper; he is also a person as able as willing to render me material service. I lately made him acquainted with my design of sending into the world a new Translation of Homer, and told him that my papers would soon attend him. He soon after desired that I would annex to them a specimen of the work. To this I at first objected, for reasons that need not be enumerated here, but at last acceded to his advice; and accordingly the day before yesterday I sent him a specimen. It consists of one hundred and seven lines, and is taken from the interview between Priam and Achilles in the last book. I chose to extract from the latter end of the poem, and as near to the close of it as possible, that I might encourage a hope in the readers of it, that if they found it in some degree worthy of their approbation, they would find the former parts of the work not less so. For if a writer flags anywhere, it must be when he is near the end.

My subscribers will have an option given them in the proposals respecting the price. My predecessor in the same business was not quite so moderate. You may say, perhaps (at least if your kindness for me did not prevent it, you would be ready to say,) "It is well—but do you place yourself on a level with Pope?" I answer, or rather *should* answer, "By no means—not as a poet; but as a translator of Homer, if I did not expect and believe that I should even surpass him, why have I meddled with this matter at all? If I confess inferiority, I reprobate my own undertaking."

When I can hear of the rest of the bishops that they preach and live as your brother does, I will think more respectfully of them than I feel inclined to do at present. They may be learned, and I know that some of them are; but your brother, learned as he is, has other more powerful recommendations. Persuade him to publish his poetry, and I promise you that he shall find as warm and sincere an admirer in me as in any man that lives.

Yours, my dear friend,
Very affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, Jan. 23, 1786.

My dear and faithful friend,— . .

. . . . . .

The paragraph that I am now beginning will contain information of a kind that I am not very fond of communicating, and on a subject that I am not very fond of writing about. Only to you I will open my budget without any reserve, because I know that in what concerns my authorship you take an interest that demands my confidence, and will be pleased with every occurrence that is at all propitious to my endeavors. Lady Hesketh, who, had she as many mouths as Virgil's Fame, with a tongue in each, would employ them all in my service, writes me word that Dr. Maty, of the Museum, has read my "Task." I cannot, even to you, relate what he says of it, though, when I began this story, I thought I had courage enough to tell it boldly. He designs, however, to give his opinion of it in his next Monthly Review; and, being informed that I was about to finish a translation of Homer, asked her ladyship's leave to mention the circumstance on that occasion. This incident pleases me the more, because I have authentic intelligence of his being a critical character, in all its forms, acute, sour, and blunt, and so incorruptible withal, and so unsusceptible of bias from undue motives, that, as my correspondent informs me, he would not praise his own mother, did he not think she deserved it.

The said "Task" is likewise gone to Oxford, conveyed thither by an intimate friend of Dr. ——, with a purpose of putting it into his hands. My friend, what will they do with me at Oxford? Will they burn me at Carfax, or will they anthematize me with bell, book, and candle? I can say with more truth than Ovid did—*Parve, nec invideo.*

The said Dr. —— has been heard to say, and I give you his own words, (stop both your ears while I utter them,) "that Homer has never been translated, and that Pope was a fool." Very irreverend language, to be sure, but, in consideration of the subject on which he used them, we will pardon it, even in a dean.* One of the masters of Eton told a friend of mine lately, that a translation of Homer is much wanted. So now you have all my news.

Yours, my dear friend, cordially,
W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Jan. 31, 1786.

It is very pleasant, my dearest Cousin, to receive a present so delicately conveyed as that which I received so lately from Anonymous; but it is also very painful to have nobody to thank for it. I find myself, therefore, driven by stress of necessity to the following resolutions, viz., that I will constitute you my thanks-receiver-general, for whatsoever gift I shall receive hereafter, as well as for those that I have already received from a nameless benefactor. I therefore thank you,

* The person here alluded to is Dr. Cyril Jackson, dean of Christ Church, Oxford, a man of profound acquirements and of great classical taste. He was formerly preceptor to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV.

my cousin, for a most elegant present, including the most elegant compliment that ever poet was honored with; for a snuff-box of tortoise-shell, with a beautiful landseape on the lid of it, glazed with crystal, having the figures of three hares in the fore ground, and inscribed above with these words, *The Peasant's Nest*—and below with these, *Tiney, Puss, and Bess.* For all and every of these I thank you, and also for standing proxy on this occasion. Nor must I forget to thank you, that so soon after I had sent you the first letter of Anonymous, I received another in the same hand.—There! Now I am a little easier.

I have almost conceived a design to send up half a dozen stout country fellows, to tie by the leg to their respective bed-posts, the company that so abridges your opportunity of writing to me. Your letters are the joy of my heart, and I cannot endure to be robbed, by I know not whom, of half my treasure. But there is no comfort without a drawback, and therefore it is that I, who have unknown friends, have unknown enemies also. Ever since I wrote last, I find myself in better health, and my nocturnal spasms and fever considerably abated. I intend to write to Dr. Kerr on Thursday, that I may gratify him with an account of my amendment: for to him I know that it will be a gratification. Were he not a physician, I should regret that he lives so distant, for he is a most agreeable man;† but, being what he is, it would be impossible to have his company, even if he were a neighbor, unless in time of sickness, at which time, whatever charms he might have himself, my own must necessarily lose much of their effect on him.

When I write to you, my dear, what I have already related to the General, I am always fearful lest I should tell you that for news with which you are well acquainted. For once, however, I will venture. On Wednesday last I received from Johnson the MS. copy of a specimen that I had sent to the General, and inclosed in the same cover Notes upon it by an unknown critic. Johnson, in a short letter, recommended him to me as a man of unquestionable learning and ability. On perusal and consideration of his remarks, I found him such, and, having nothing so much at heart as to give all possible security to yourself and the General that my work shall not come forth unfinished, I answered Johnson that I would gladly submit my MS. to his friend. He is in truth a very clever fellow, perfectly a stranger to me, and one who, I promise you, will not spare for severity of animadversion, where he shall find occasion. It is impossible for you, my dearest cousin, to express a wish that I do not equally feel a wish to gratify. You are desirous that Maty should see a book of my Homer, and for that reason, if Maty *will* see a book of it, he shall be welcome, although time is likely to be precious, and consequently any delay that is not absolutely necessary as much as possible to be avoided. I am now revising the "Iliad." It is a business that will cost me four months, perhaps five: for I compare the very words as I go, and, if much alteration should occur, must transcribe the whole. The first book I have almost transcribed already. To these five months Johnson says that nine more must be added for printing, and upon my own experience, I will venture to assure you that the tardiness of printers will make those nine months twelve. There is danger therefore that my subscribers may think that I make them wait too long, and that they who know me not, may suspect a bubble. How glad shall I be to read it over in an evening, book by book, as fast as I settle the copy, to you and to Mrs. Unwin! She has been my touchstone always, and without reference to her taste and judgment I have printed nothing. With one of you at each elbow, I should think myself the happiest of all poets.

The General and I, having broken the ice, are upon the most comfortable terms of correspondence. He writes very affectionately to me, and I say everything that comes uppermost. I could not write frequently to any creature living upon any other terms than those. He tells me of infirmities that he has, which make him less active than he was. I am sorry to hear that he has any such. Alas! alas! he was young when I saw him, only twenty years ago.

I have the most affectionate letter imaginable from Colman, who writes to me like a brother. The Chancellor is yet dumb.

May God have you in his keeping, my beloved cousin.

Farewell, W. C.

* Dr. Kerr was an eminent physician, in great practice, and resident at Northampton.

Lady Hesketh having announced her intention of paying a visit to Cowper, the following letters abound in all that delightful anticipation which the prospect of renewing so endeared an intercourse naturally suggested.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Feb. 9, 1786.

My dearest Cousin,—I have been impatient to tell you that I am impatient to see you again. Mrs. Unwin partakes with me in all my feelings upon this subject, and longs also to see you. I should have told you so by the last post, but have been so completely occupied by this tormenting specimen, that it was impossible to do it. I sent the General a letter on Monday that would

distress and alarm him; I sent him another yesterday, that will, I hope, quiet him again. Johnson has apologized very civilly for the multitude of his friend's strictures; and his friend has promised to confine himself in future to a comparison with the original, so that (I doubt not) we shall jog on merrily together. And now, my dear, let me tell you once more that your kindness in promising us a visit has charmed us both. I shall see you again. I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will show you my prospects, the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse, and its banks, everything that I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it at this moment. Talk not of an inn! Mention it not for your life! We have never had so many visitors but we could easily accommodate them all, though we have received Unwin, and his wife, and his sister, and his son, all at once. My dear, I will not let you come till the end of May, or beginning of June, because, before that time my green-house will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with mats, and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit, with a bed of mignonette at your side, and a hedge of honeysuckles, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day. Sooner than the time I mention the country will not be in complete beauty. And I will tell you what you shall find at your first entrance. Imprimis, as soon as you have entered the vestibule, if you cast a look on either side of you, you shall see on the right hand a box of my making. It is the box in which have been lodged all my hares, and in which lodges Puss at present. But he, poor fellow, is worn out with age, and promises to die before you can see him. On the right hand stands a cupboard, the work of the same author; it was once a dove-cage, but I transformed it. Opposite to you stands a table, which I also made. But, a merciless servant having scrubbed it until it became paralytic, it serves no purpose now but of ornament; and all my clean shoes stand under it. On the left hand, at the farther end of this superb vestibule, you will find the door of the parlor, into which I will conduct you, and where I will introduce you to Mrs. Unwin, unless we should meet her before, and where we will be as happy as the day is long. Order yourself, my cousin, to the Swan, at Newport, and there you shall find me ready to conduct you to Olney.

My dear, I have told Homer what you say about casks and urns, and have asked him whether he is sure that it is a cask in which Jupiter keeps his wine. He swears that it is a cask, and that it will never be anything better than a cask to eternity. So if the god is content with it, we must even wonder at his taste, and be so too.

Adieu! my dearest, dearest Cousin,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Feb. 11, 1786.

My dearest Cousin,—It must be, I suppose, a fortnight or thereabout since I wrote last, I feel myself so alert and so ready to write again. Be that as it may, here I come. We talk of nobody but you, what we will do with you when we get you, where you shall walk, where you shall sleep, in short everything that bears the remotest relation to your well-being at Olney occupies all our talking time, which is all that I do not spend at Troy.

I have every reason for writing to you as often as I can, but I have a particular reason for doing it now. I want to tell you, that by the diligence on Wednesday next, I mean to send you a quire of my Homer for Maty's perusal. It will contain the first book, and as much of the second as brings us to the catalogue of the ships, and is every morsel of the revised copy that I have transcribed. My dearest cousin, read it yourself, let the General read it, do what you please with it, so that it reach Johnson in due time. But let Maty be the only *Critic* that has anything to do with it. The vexation, the perplexity, that attends a multiplicity of criticisms by various hands, many of which are sure to be futile, many of them ill-founded, and some of them contradictory to others, is inconceivable, except by the author whose ill-fated work happens to be the subject of them. This also appears to me self-evident, that if a work have passed under the review of one man of taste and learning, and have had the good fortune to please him, his approbation gives security for that of all others qualified like himself. I speak thus, my dear, after having just escaped from such a storm of trouble, occasioned by endless remarks, hints, suggestions, and objections, as drove me almost to despair, and to the very verge of a resolution to drop my undertaking forever. With infinite difficulty I at last sifted the chaff from the wheat, availing myself of what appeared to me to be just, and rejected the rest, but not till the labor and anxiety had nearly undone all that Kerr had been doing for me. My beloved cousin, trust me for it, as you safely may, that temper, vanity, and self-importance, had nothing to do in all this distress that I suffered. It was merely the effect of an alarm that I could not help taking, when I compared the great trouble I had with a few lines only, thus handled, with

that which I foresaw such handling of the whole must necessarily give me. I felt beforehand that my constitution would not bear it. I shall send up this second specimen in a box that I have made on purpose; and when Maty has done with the copy, and you have done with it yourself, then you must return it in said box to my translatorship. Though Johnson's friend has teased me sadly, I verily believe that I shall have no more such cause to complain of him. We now understand one another, and I firmly believe that I might have gone the world through before I had found his equal in an accurate and familiar acquaintance with the original.

A letter to Mr. Urban in the last Gentleman's Magazine, of which I's book is the subject, pleases me more than anything I have seen in the way of eulogium yet. I have no guess of the author.

I do not wish to remind the Chancellor of his promise. Ask you why, my Cousin? Because I suppose it would be impossible. He has, no doubt, forgotten it entirely, and would be obliged to take my word for the truth of it, which I could not bear. We drank tea together with Mrs. C——e, and her sister, in King-street, Bloomsbury, and there was the promise made. I said, "Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall be always nobody, and you will be Chancellor. You shall provide for me when you are." He smiled, and replied, "I surely will." "These ladies," said I, "are witnesses." He still smiled, and said, "Let them be so, for I certainly will do it." But alas! twenty-four years have passed since the day of the date thereof; and to mention it now would be to upbraid him with inattention to his plighted troth. Neither do I suppose that he could easily serve such a creature as I am, if he would.

Adieu, whom I love entirely,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Feb. 18, 1786.

My dear Friend,—I feel myself truly obliged to you for the leave that you give me to be less frequent in my writing, and more brief than heretofore. I have a long work upon my hands; and standing engaged to the public (for by this time I suppose my subscription papers to be gone abroad, not only for the performance of it, but for the performance of it in a reasonable time), it seems necessary to me not to intermit it often. My correspondence has also lately been renewed with several of my relations, and unavoidably engrosses now and then one of the few opportunities that I can find for writing. I nevertheless intend, in the exchange of letters with you, to be as regular as I can be, and to use, like a friend, the friendly allowance that you have made me.

My reason for giving notice of an Odyssey as well as an Iliad, was this: I feared that the public being left to doubt whether I should ever translate the former, would be unwilling to treat with me for the latter; which they would be apt to consider as an odd volume, and unworthy to stand upon their shelves alone. It is hardly probable, however, that I should begin the Odyssey for some months to come, being now closely engaged in the revisal of my translation of the Iliad, which I compare as I go most minutely with the original. One of the great defects of Pope's translation is that it is licentious. To publish therefore a translation now, that should be at all chargeable with the same fault, that were not indeed as close and as faithful as possible, would be only *actum agere*, and had therefore better be left undone. Whatever be said of mine when it shall appear, it shall never be said that it is not faithful.

I thank you heartily, both for your wishes and prayers that, should a disappointment occur, I may not be too much hurt by it. Strange as it may seem to say it, and unwilling as I should be to say it to any person less candid than yourself, I will nevertheless say that I have not entered on this work, unconnected as it must needs appear with the interests of the cause of God, without the direction of his providence, nor altogether unassisted by him in the performance of it. Time will show to what it ultimately tends. I am inclined to believe that it has a tendency to which I myself am at present perfectly a stranger. Be that as it may, he knows my frame, and will consider that I am but dust; dust, into the bargain, that has been so trampled under foot and beaten, that a storm, less violent than an unsuccessful issue of such a business might occasion, would be sufficient to blow me quite away. But I will tell you honestly, I have no fears upon the subject. My predecessor has given me every advantage.

As I know not to what end this my present occupation may finally lead, so neither did I know, when I wrote it, or at all suspect one valuable end at least that was to be answered by "The Task." It has pleased God to prosper it; and, being composed in blank verse, it is likely to prove as seasonable an introduction to a blank verse Homer by the same hand as any that could have been devised; yet, when I wrote the last line of "The Task," I as little suspected that I should ever engage in a version of the old Asiatic tale as you do now.

* Private correspondence.

I should choose for your general motto:—

Carmina tum melius, cum venerit ipse, canemus.

For Vol. I.—

Unum pro multis dabitur caput.

For Vol. II.—

Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo.

It seems to me that you cannot have better than these.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Feb. 19, 1786.

My dearest Cousin,—Since so it must be, so it shall be. If you will not sleep under the roof of a friend, may you never sleep under the roof of an enemy! An enemy, however, you will not presently find. Mrs. Unwin bids me mention her affectionately, and tell you that she willingly gives up a part, for the sake of the rest—willingly, at least as far as willingly may consist with some reluctance: I feel my reluctance too. Our design was that you should have slept in the room that serves me for a study, and its having been occupied by you would have been an additional recommendation of it to me. But all reluctances are superseded by the thought of seeing you; and because we have nothing so much at heart as the wish to see you happy and comfortable, we are desirous therefore to accommodate you to your own mind, and not to ours. Mrs. Unwin has already secured for you an apartment, or rather two, just such as we could wish. The house in which you will find them is within thirty yards of our own, and opposite to it. The whole affair is thus commodiously adjusted; and now I have nothing to do but to wish for June; and June, my Cousin, was never so wished for since June was made. I shall have a thousand things to hear, and a thousand to say, and they will all rush into my mind together, till it will be so crowded with things impatient to be said, that for some time I shall say nothing. But no matter—sooner or later they will all come out; and since we shall have you the longer for not having you under our own roof (a circumstance that more than anything reconciles us to that measure), they will stand the better chance. After so long a separation,—a separation that of late seemed likely to last for life—we shall meet each other as alive from the dead: and for my own part, I can truly say, that I have not a friend in the other world whose resurrection would give me greater pleasure.

I am truly happy, my dear, in having pleased you with what you have seen of my Homer. I wish that all English readers had your unsophisticated, or rather unadulterated taste, and could relish simplicity like you. But I am well aware that in this respect I am under a disadvantage, and that many, especially many ladies, missing many turns and prettinesses of expression, that they have admired in Pope, will account my translation in those particulars defective. But I comfort myself with the thought, that in reality it is no defect; on the contrary, that the want of all such embellishments as do not belong to the original, will be one of its principal merits with persons indeed capable of relishing Homer. He is the best poet that ever lived for many reasons, but for none more than for that majestic plainness that distinguishes him from all others. As an accomplished person moves gracefully without thinking of it, in like manner the dignity of Homer seems to cost him no labor. It was natural to him to say great things, and to say them well, and little ornaments were beneath his notice. If Maty, my dearest cousin, should return to you my copy, with any such strictures as may make it necessary for me to see it again, before it goes to Johnson, in that case you shall send it to me, otherwise to Johnson immediately; for he writes me word he wishes his friend to go to work upon it as soon as possible. When you come, my dear, we will hang all these critics together; for they have worried me without remorse or conscience. At least one of them has. I had actually murdered more than a few of the best lines in the specimen, in compliance with his requisitions, but plucked up my courage at last, and, in the very last opportunity that I had, recovered them to life again by restoring the original reading. At the same time I readily confess that the specimen is the better for all this discipline its author has undergone, but then it has been more indebted for its improvement to that pointed accuracy of examination to which I was myself excited, than to any proposed amendments from Mr. Critic; for, as sure as you are my cousin, whom I long to see at Olney, so surely would he have done me irreparable mischief, if I would have given him leave.

My friend Bagot writes to me in a most friendly strain, and calls loudly upon me for original poetry. When I shall have done with Homer, probably he will not call in vain. Having found the prime feather of a swan on the banks of the *smug and silver Trent*, he keeps it for me.

Adieu, dear Cousin, W. C.

I am sorry that the General has such indifferent health. He must not die. I can by no means spare a person so kind to me.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, Feb. 27, 1786.

Alas! alas! my dear, dear friend, may God himself comfort you! I will not be so absurd as to attempt it.* By the close of your letter, it should seem that in this hour of great trial he withholds not his consolations from you. I know, by experience, that they are neither few nor small; and though I feel for you as I never felt for man before, yet do I sincerely rejoice in this, that, whereas there is but one true comforter in the universe, under afflictions such as yours, you both know Him, and know where to seek Him. I thought you a man the most happily mated that I had ever seen, and had great pleasure in your felicity. Pardon me, if now I feel a wish that, short as my acquaintance with her was, I had never seen her. I should have mourned with you, but not as I do now. Mrs. Unwin sympathizes with you also most sincerely, and you neither are nor will be soon forgotten in such prayers as we can make at Olney. I will not detain you longer now, my poor afflicted friend, than to commit you to the tender mercy of God, and to bid you a sorrowful adieu!

Adieu! Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, March 6, 1786.

My dearest Cousin,—Your opinion has more weight with me than that of all the critics in the world; and, to give you a proof of it, I make you a concession that I would hardly have made to them all united. I do not indeed absolutely covenant, promise, and agree, that I will discard *all* my elisions, but I hereby bind myself to dismiss *as many* of them as, without sacrificing energy to sound, I can. It is incumbent upon me in the meantime to say something in justification of the few that I shall retain, that I may not seem a poet mounted rather on a mule than on Pegasus. In the first place, *The* is a barbarism. We are indebted for it to the Celts, or the Goths, or to the Saxons, or perhaps to them all. In the two best languages that ever were spoken, the Greek and the Latin, there is no similar incumbrance of expression to be found. Secondly, the perpetual use of it in our language is, to us miserable poets, attended with two great inconveniences. Our verse consisting only of ten syllables, it not unfrequently happens that the fifth part of a line is to be engrossed, and necessarily too, unless elision prevents it, by this abominable intruder, and, which is worse on my account, open vowels are continually the consequence—*The* element—*The* air, &c. Thirdly, the French, who are equally with the English chargeable with barbarism in this particular, dispose of their *Le* and their *La* without ceremony, and always take care that they shall be absorbed, both in verse and in prose, in the vowel that immediately follows them. Fourthly, and I believe lastly, (and for your sake I wish it may prove so,) the practice of cutting short *The* is warranted by Milton, who of all English poets that ever lived, had certainly the finest ear. Dr. Warton indeed has dared to say that he had a bad one, for which he deserves, as far as critical demerit can deserve it, to lose his own. I thought I had done, but there is still a fifthly behind; and it is this, that the custom of abbreviating *The*, belongs to the style in which, in my advertisement annexed to the specimen, I profess to write. The use of that style would have warranted me in the practice of much greater liberty of this sort than I ever intended to take. In perfect consistence with that style, I might say, I' th' tempest, I' th' doorway, &c., which, however, I would not allow myself to do, because I was aware that it would be objected to, and with reason. But it seems to me, for the causes above-said, that when I shorten *The*, before a vowel, or before *wh*, as in the line you mention,

"Than th' whole broad Hellespont in all its parts,"

my license is not equally exceptionable, because *W*, though he rank as a consonant, in the word *whole*, is not allowed to announce himself to the ear; and *H* is an aspirate. But as I said in the beginning, so say I still, I am most willing to conform myself to your very sensible observation, that it is necessary, if we would please, to consult the taste of our own day; neither would I have pelted you, my dearest cousin, with any part of this volley of good reasons, had I not designed them as an answer to those objections, which you say you have heard from others. But I only mention them. Though satisfactory to myself, I waive them, and will allow to *The* his whole dimensions, whensoever it can be done.

Thou only critic of my verse that is to be found in all the earth, whom I love, what shall I say in answer to your own objection to that passage?

"Softly he placed his hand
On th' old man's hand, and pushed it gently away."

I can say neither more nor less than this, that when our dear friend, the General, sent me his opinion on the specimen, quoting those very words from it, he added—"With this part I was particularly pleased: there is nothing in poetry more descriptive." Such

* Mr. Bagot had recently sustained the loss of his wife.

were his very words. Taste, my dear, is various; there is nothing so various; and even between persons of the best taste there are diversities of opinion on the same subject, for which it is not possible to account. So much for these matters.

You advise me to consult the General and to confide in him. I follow your advice, and have done both. By the last post I asked his permission to send him the books of my Homer, as fast as I should finish them off. I shall be glad of his remarks, and more glad, than of anything, to do that which I hope may be agreeable to him. They will of course pass into your hands before they are sent to Johnson. The quire that I sent is now in the hands of Johnson's friend. I intended to have told you in my last, but forgot it, that Johnson behaves very handsomely in the affair of my two volumes. He acts with a liberality not often found in persons of his occupation, and to mention it when occasion calls me to it is a justice due to him.

I am very much pleased with Mr. Stanley's letter—several compliments were paid me on the subject of that first volume by my own friends, but I do not recollect that I ever knew the opinion of a stranger about it before, whether favorable or otherwise; I only heard by a side wind that it was very much read in Scotland, and more than here.

Farewell, my dearest cousin, whom we expect, of whom we talk continually, and whom we continually long for. W. C.

P. S. Your anxious wishes for my success delight me, and you may rest assured, my dear, that I have all the ambition on the subject that you can wish me to feel. I more than admire my author. I often stand astonished at his beauties: I am forever amused with the translation of him, and I have received a thousand encouragements. These are all so many happy omens that I hope shall be verified by the event.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, March 13, 1786.

My dear Friend,—I seem to be about to write to you, but I foresee that it will not be a letter, but a scrap that I shall send you. I could tell you things, that, knowing how much you interest yourself in my success, I am sure would please you, but every moment of my leisure is necessarily spent at Troy. I am revising my translation, and bestowing on it more labor than at first. At the repeated solicitation of General Cowper, who had doubtless irrefragable reason on his side, I have put my book into the hands of the most extraordinary critic that I have ever heard of. He is a Swiss; has an accurate knowledge of English, and, for his knowledge of Homer, has I verily believe no fellow. Johnson recommended him to me. I am to send him the quires as fast as I finish them off, and the first is now in his hands. I have the comfort to be able to tell you that he is very much pleased with what he has seen: Johnson wrote to me lately on purpose to tell me so. Things having taken this turn, I fear that I must beg a release from my engagement to put the MS. into your hands. I am bound to print as soon as three hundred shall have subscribed, and consequently have not an hour to spare.

People generally love to go where they are admired, yet Lady Hesketh complains of not having seen you.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, April 1, 1786.

My dear Friend,—I have made you wait long for an answer, and am now obliged to write in a hurry. But, lest my longer silence should alarm you, hurried as I am, still I write. I told you, if I mistake not, that the circle of my correspondence has lately been enlarged, and it seems still increasing; which, together with my poetical business, makes an *hour* a *momentous* affair. Pardon an unintentional pun. You need not fear for my health: it suffers nothing by my employment.

We who in general see no company are at present in expectation of a great deal, at least, if three different visits may be called so. Mr. and Mrs. Powley, in the first place, are preparing for a journey southward. She is far from well, but thinks herself well enough to travel, and feels an affectionate impatience for another sight of Olney.†

In the next place, we expect, as soon as the season shall turn up bright and warm, General Cowper and his son. I have not seen him these twenty years and upwards, but our intercourse, having been lately revived, is likely to become closer, warmer, and more intimate than ever.

Lady Hesketh also comes down in June, and if she can be accommodated with anything in the shape of a dwelling at Olney, talks of making it always, in part, her summer residence. It has pleased God that I should, like Joseph, be put into a well, and, because there are no Midianites in the way to deliver me, therefore my friends are coming down into the well to see me.

I wish you, we both wish you, all happiness in your new habitation: at least you will be sure to find the situation more commodious. I thank you for all your hints concerning my work, which shall be duly at-

* Private correspondence.
† Mrs. Unwin's daughter.

tended to. You may assure all whom it may concern, that all offensive elisions will be done away. With Mrs. Unwin's love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, I remain, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

W. C.

The friends of Cowper were not without alarm at his engaging in so lengthened and perilous an undertaking as a new version of the Iliad, when the popular translation of Pope seemed to render such an attempt superfluous. To one of his correspondents, who urged this objection, he makes the following reply.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, April 5, 1786.

I did, as you suppose, bestow all possible consideration on the subject of an apology for my Homerican undertaking. I turned the matter about in my mind a hundred different ways, and, in every way in which it would present itself, found it an impracticable business. It is impossible for me, with what delicacy soever I may manage it, to state the objections that lie against Pope's translation, without incurring odium and the imputation of arrogance; foreseeing this danger, I choose to say nothing.

W. C.

P. S. You may well wonder at my courage, who have undertaken a work of such enormous length. You would wonder more if you knew that I translated the whole Iliad with no other help than a Clavis. But I have since equipped myself better for this immense journey, and am revising the work in company with a good commentator.

The motives which induced Cowper to engage in a new version of the Iliad originated in the conviction, that, however Pope's translation might be embellished with harmonious numbers, and all the charm and grace of poetic diction, it failed in being a correct and faithful representation of that immortal production. Its character is supposed to be justly designated by its title of "Pope's Homer." It is not the Homer of the heroic ages; it does not express his majesty—his unadorned, yet sublime simplicity. It is Homer in modern costume, decked in a court dress, and in the trappings of refined taste and fashion. His sententious brevity, which possesses the art of conveying much compressed in a short space, is also expanded and dilated, till it resembles a paraphrase, and an imitation, rather than a just and accurate version of its expressive and speaking original. We believe this to be the general estimate of the merits of Pope's translation. Profound scholars, and one especially, whose discriminating taste and judgment conferred authority on his decision, Dr. Cyril Jackson (formerly the well-known Dean of Christ Church, Oxford), concur in this opinion. But notwithstanding this redundance of artificial ornament, and the "labored elegance of polished version," the translation of Pope will perhaps always retain its pre-eminence, and be considered what Johnson calls it, "the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen," and "its publication one of the greatest events in the annals of learning."*

Of the merits of Cowper's translation, we shall have occasion hereafter to speak. But it is due to the cause of sound criticism, and to the merited claims of his laborious undertaking, to declare that he who would wish to know and understand Homer must seek for him in the expressive and unadorned version of Cowper.

In the course of the following letters we shall discover many interesting particulars of the progress of this undertaking.

Cowper was now looking forward with great anxiety, to the promised visit of Lady Hesketh. The following letter adverts to the preparations making at the vicarage at Olney for her reception; and to her delicate mode of administering to his personal comforts and enjoyments.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, April 17, 1786.

My dearest Cousin,—If you will not quote Solomon, my dearest cousin, I will. He says, and as beautifully as truly—"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life!" I feel how much reason he had on his side when he made this observation, and am myself sick of your fortnight's delay.

. . . . . .

The vicarage was built by Lord Dartmouth, and was not finished till some time after we arrived at Olney, consequently it is new. It is a smart stone building, well sashed, by much too good for the living, but just what I would wish for you. It has, as you justly concluded from my premises, a garden, but rather calculated for use than ornament. It is square, and well walled, but has neither arbor nor alcove nor other shade, except the shadow of the house. But we have two gardens, which are yours. Between your mansion and ours is interposed nothing but an orchard, into which a door, opening out of our garden, affords us the easiest communication imaginable, will save the round about by the town, and make both houses one. Your chamber windows

* See Johnson's Life of Pope. The original manuscript copy of Pope's translation is deposited in the British Museum.

look over the river, and over the meadows, to a village called Emberton, and command the whole length of a long bridge, described by a certain poet, together with a view of the road at a distance.* Should you wish for books at Olney, you must bring them with you, or you will wish in vain, for I have none but the works of a certain poet, Cowper, of whom, perhaps, you have heard, and they are as yet but two volumes. They may multiply hereafter, but at present they are no more.

You are the first person for whom I have heard Mrs. Unwin express such feelings as she does for you. She is not profuse in professions, nor forward to enter into treaties of friendship with new faces, but when her friendship is once engaged, it may be confided in, even unto death. She loves you already, and how much more will she love you before this time twelvemonth! I have indeed endeavored to describe you to her, but, perfectly as I have you by heart, I am sensible that my picture cannot do you justice. I never saw one that did. Be you what you may, you are much beloved, and will be so at Olney, and Mrs. U. expects you with the pleasure that one feels at the return of a long absent, dear relation; that is to say, with a pleasure such as mine. She sends you her warmest affections.

On Friday, I received a letter from dear Anonymous,† apprizing me of a parcel that the coach would bring me on Saturday. Who is there in the world that has, or thinks he has reason to love me to the degree that he does? But it is no matter. He chooses to be unknown, and his choice is, and ever shall be so sacred to me, that, if his name lay on the table before me reversed, I would not turn the paper about, that I might read it. Much as it would gratify me to thank him, I would turn my eyes away from the forbidden discovery. I long to assure him that those same eyes, concerning which he expresses such kind apprehensions, lest they should suffer by this laborious undertaking, are as well as I could expect them to be, if I were never to touch either book or pen. Subject to weakness and occasional slight inflammations it is probable that they will always be, but I cannot remember the time when they enjoyed anything so like an exemption from those infirmities as at present. One would almost suppose that reading Homer were the best ophthalmic in the world. I should be happy to remove his solicitude on the subject, but it is a pleasure that he will not let me enjoy. Well then, I will be content without it; and so content, that though I believe you, my dear, to be in full possession of all this mystery, you shall never know me, while you live, either directly or by hints of any sort, attempt to extort or to steal the secret from you: I should think myself as justly punishable as the Bethshemites, for looking into the ark, which they were not allowed to touch.

I have not sent for Kerr,* for Kerr can do nothing but send me to Bath, and to Bath I cannot go for a thousand reasons. The summer will set me up again; I grow fat every day, and shall be as big as Gog or Magog, or both put together, before you come.

I did actually live three years with Mr. Chapman, a solicitor, that is to say, I slept three years in his house, but I lived, that is to say, I spent my days in Southampton Row, as you very well remember. There was I, and the future Lord Chancellor, constantly employed from morning to night in giggling and making giggle, instead of studying the law. O fie, cousin! how could you do so? I am pleased with Lord Thurlow's inquiries about me. If he takes it into that inimitable head of his, he may make a man of me yet. I could love him heartily, if he would deserve it at my hands. That I did so once is certain. The Duchess of ———, who in the world set her agoing? But if all the duchesses in the world were spinning, like so many whirligigs, for my benefit, I would not stop them. It is a noble thing to be a poet, it makes all the world so lively. I might have preached more sermons than even Tillotson did, and better, and the world would have been still fast asleep, but a volume of verse is a fiddle that puts the universe in motion.

Yours,
My dear friend and cousin, W. C.

* Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright.
The Task, Book IV.

† Lady Hesketh adopted this delicate mode of extending her kindness to the Poet.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, April 24, 1786.

Your letters are so much my comfort, that I often tremble lest by accident I should be disappointed; and the more because you have been, more than once, so engaged in company on the writing day, that I have had a narrow escape. Let me give you a piece of good counsel, my cousin: follow my laudable example, write when you can, take time's forelock in one hand, and a pen in the other, and so make sure of your opportunity. It is well for me that you write faster than anybody, and more in an hour than other people in two, else I know not what would become of me. When I read your letters, I hear you talk, and I love talking letters dearly, especially from you. Well! the middle of June

* Dr. Kerr, of Northampton.

will not be always a thousand years off, and when it comes I shall hear you, and see you too, and shall not care a farthing then if you do not touch a pen in a month. By the way, you must either send me or bring me some more paper, for before the moon shall have performed a few more revolutions, I shall not have a scrap left, and tedious revolutions they are just now, that is certain.

I give you leave to be as peremptory as you please, especially at a distance; but, when you say that you are a Cowper, (and the better it is for the Cowpers that such you are, and I give them joy of you, with all my heart,) you must not forget, that I boast myself a Cowper too, and have my humors, and fancies, and purposes, and determinations, as well as others of my name, and hold them as fast as they can. *You* indeed tell *me* how often I shall see you when you come. A pretty story truly. I am an *he* Cowper, my dear, and claim the privileges that belong to my noble sex. But these matters shall be settled, as my cousin Agamemnon used to say, at a more convenient time.

I shall rejoice to see the letter you promise me, for, though I met with a morsel of praise last week, I do not know that the week current is likely to produce me any, and having lately been pretty much pampered with that diet, I expect to find myself rather hungry by the time when your next letter shall arrive. It will therefore be very opportune. The morsel above alluded to came from—whom do you think? From ——, but she desires that her authorship may be a secret. And in my answer I promised not to divulge it, except to you. It is a pretty copy of verses, neatly written and well turned, and when you come you shall see them. I intend to keep all pretty things to myself till then, that they may serve me as a bait to lure you hither more effectually. The last letter that I had from —— I received so many years since, that it seems as if it had reached me a good while before I was born.

I was grieved at the heart that the General could not come, and that illness was in part the cause that hindered him. I have sent him, by his express desire, a new edition of the first book and half of the second. He would not suffer me to send it to you, my dear, lest you should post it away to Maty at once. He did not give that reason, but being shrewd I found it.

The grass begins to grow, and the leaves to bud, and everything is preparing to be beautiful against you come.

Adieu! W. C.

P. S. You inquire of our walks, I perceive, as well as our rides. They are beautiful. You inquire also concerning a cellar. You have two cellars. Oh! what years have passed since we took the same walks, and drank out of the same bottle! but a few more weeks, and then!

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 8, 1786.

I did not at all doubt that your tenderness for my feelings had inclined you to suppress in your letters to me the intelligence concerning Maty's critique, that yet reached me from another quarter. When I wrote to you, I had not learned it from the General, but from my friend Bull, who only knew it by hearsay. The next post brought me the news of it from the first mentioned, and the critique itself inclosed. Together with it came also a squib discharged against me in the "Public Advertiser." The General's letter found me in one of my most melancholy moods, and my spirits did not rise on the receipt of it. The letter indeed that he had cut from the newspaper gave me little pain, both because it contained nothing formidable, though written with malevolence enough, and because a nameless author can have no more weight with his readers than the reason which he has on his side can give him. But Maty's animadversions hurt me more. In part they appeared to me unjust, and in part ill-natured, and yet, the man himself being an oracle in everybody's account, I apprehended that he had done me much mischief Why he says that the translation is far from exact is best known to himself. For I know it to be as exact as is compatible with poetry; and prose translations of Homer are not wanted, the world has one already. But I will not fill my letter to you with hypercriticisms, I will only add an extract from a letter of Colman's, that I received last Friday, and will then dismiss the subject. It came accompanied by a copy of the specimen which he himself had amended, and with so much taste and candor that it charmed me. He says as follows:—

"One copy I have returned, with some remarks prompted by my zeal for your success, not, Heaven knows, by arrogance or impertinence. I know no other way, at once so plain and so short, of delivering my thoughts on the specimen of your translation, which on the whole, I admire exceedingly, thinking it breathes the spirit and conveys the manner of the original; though having here neither Homer, nor Pope's Homer, I cannot speak precisely of particular lines or expressions, or compare your blank verse with his rhyme, except by declaring that I think blank verse infinitely more congenial to the magnificent simplicity of Homer's hexameters, than the confined couplets and the jingle of rhyme."

His amendments are chiefly bestowed on the lines encumbered with elisions, and I

will just take this opportunity to tell you, my dear, because I know you to be as much interested in what I write as myself, that some of the most offensive of these elisions were occasioned by mere criticism. I was fairly hunted into them, by vexatious objections made without end, by —— and his friend, and altered, and altered, till at last I did not care how I altered. Many thanks for ——'s verses, which deserve just the character you give of them. They are neat and easy—but I would mumble her well, if I could get at her, for allowing herself to suppose for a moment that I praised the chancellor with a view to emolument.* I wrote those stanzas merely for my own amusement, and they slept in a dark closet years after I composed them; not in the least designed for publication. But when Johnson had printed off the longer pieces, of which the first volume principally consists, he wrote me word that he wanted yet two thousand lines to swell it to a proper size. On that occasion it was that I collected every scrap of verse that I could find, and that among the rest. None of the smaller poems had been introduced, or had been published at all with my name, but for this necessity.

Just as I wrote the last word, I was called down to Dr. Kerr, who came to pay me a voluntary visit. Were I sick, his cheerful and friendly manner would almost restore me. Air and exercise are his theme; them he recommends as the best physic for me, and in all weathers. Come, therefore, my dear, and take a little of this good physic with me, for you will find it beneficial as well as I: come and assist Mrs. Unwin in the re-establishment of your cousin's health. Air and exercise, and she and you together, will make me a perfect Samson. You will have a good house over your head, comfortable apartments, obliging neighbors, good roads, a pleasant country, and in us, your constant companions, two who will love you, and do already love you dearly, and with all our hearts. If you are in any danger of trouble, it is from myself, if any fits of dejection seize me; and, as often as they do, you will be grieved for me; but perhaps by your assistance I shall be able to resist them better. If there is a creature under heaven, from whose co-operations with Mrs. Unwin I can reasonably expect such a blessing, that creature is yourself. I was not without such attacks when I lived in London, though at that time, they were less oppressive, but in your company I was never unhappy a whole day in all my life.

Of how much importance is an author to himself! I return to that abominable specimen again, just to notice Maty's impatient censure of the repetition that you mention. I mean of the word *hand*. In the original there is not a repetition of it. But to repeat a word in that manner, and on such an occasion, is by no means (what he calls it) a *modern* invention. In Homer I could show him many such, and in Virgil they abound. Colman, who in his judgment of classical matters is inferior to none, says, "*I know no' why Maty objects to this expression.*" I could easily change it. But, the case standing thus. I know not whether my proud stomach will condescend so low. I rather feel myself disinclined to it.

One evening last week, Mrs. Unwin and I took our walk to Weston, and, as we were returning through the grove opposite the house, the Throckmortons presented themselves at the door. They are owners of a house at Weston, at present empty. It is a very good one, infinitely superior to ours. When we drank chocolate with them, they both expressed their ardent desire that we would take it, wishing to have us for nearer neighbors. If you, my cousin, were not so well provided for as you are, and at our very elbow, I verily believe I should have mustered all my rhetoric to recommend it to you. You might have it forever without danger of ejectment, whereas your possession of the vicarage depends on the life of the vicar, who is eighty-six.* The environs are most beautiful, and the village itself one of the prettiest I ever saw. Add to this, you would step immediately into Mr. Throckmorton's pleasure-ground, where you would not soil your slipper even in winter. A most unfortunate mistake was made by that gentleman's bailiff in his absence. Just before he left Weston last year for the winter, he gave him orders to cut short the tops of the flowering shrubs, that lined a serpentine walk in a delightful grove, celebrated by my poetship in a little piece, that (you remember) was called "The Shrubbery."† The dunce, misapprehending the order, cut down and fagoted up the whole grove, leaving neither tree, bush, nor twig; nothing but stumps about as high as my ancle. Mrs. T. told us that she never saw her husband so angry in his life. I judge indeed by his physiognomy, which has great sweetness in it, that he is very little addicted to that infernal passion, but had he cudgelled the man for his cruel blunder and the havoc made in consequence of it, I could have excused him.

I felt myself really concerned for the chancellor's illness, and, from what I learned of it, both from the papers and from General Cowper, concluded that he must die. I am accordingly delighted in the same proportion with the news of his recovery. May he live.

* See the verses on Lord Thurlow—
"Round Thurlow's head in early youth," &c. &c.

* The Rev. Moses Brown.
† "O happy shades, &c. &c.

and live to be still the support of government! If it shall be his good pleasure to render me personally any material service, I have no objection to it. But Heaven knows that it is impossible for any living wight to bestow less thought on that subject than myself.

May God be ever with you, my beloved cousin! W. C.

The mingled feelings with which we meet a long absent friend, and the alternate sensations of delight and nervous anxiety experienced as the long wished for moment approaches, are expressed with singular felicity in the following letter.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 15, 1786.

My dearest Cousin,—From this very morning I begin to date the last month of our long separation, and confidently and most comfortably hope, that before the 15th of June shall present itself we shall have seen each other. Is it not so? And will it not be one of the most extraordinary eras of my extraordinary life? A year ago, we neither corresponded nor expected to meet in this world. But this world is a scene of marvellous events, many of them more marvellous than fiction itself would dare to hazard;* and, blessed be God! they are not all of the distressing kind. Now and then, in the course of an existence whose hue is for the most part sable, a day turns up that makes amends for many sighs and many subjects of complaint. Such a day shall I account the day of your arrival at Olney.

Wherefore is it (canst thou tell me?) that, together with all those delightful sensations, to which the sight of a long absent dear friend gives birth, there is a mixture of something painful, flutterings, and tumults, and I know not what accompaniments of our pleasure, that are in fact perfectly foreign from the occasion? Such I feel, when I think of our meeting, and such, I suppose feel you: and the nearer the crisis approaches, the more I am sensible of them. I know, beforehand, that they will increase with every turn of the wheels that shall convey me to Newport, when I shall set out to meet you, and that, when we shall actually meet, the pleasure, and this unaccountable pain together, will be as much as I shall be able to support. I am utterly at a loss for the cause, and can only resolve it into that appointment by which it has been forordained that all human delights shall be qualified and mingled with their contraries. For there is nothing formidable in you. To me at least there is nothing such, no, not even in your menaces, unless when you threaten me to write no more. Nay, I verily believe, did I not know you to be what you are, and had less affection for you than I have, I should have fewer of these emotions, of which I would have none, if I could help it. But a fig for them all! Let us resolve to combat with and to conquer them. They are dreams. They are illusions of the judgment. Some enemy, that hates the happiness of human kind, and is ever industrious to dash it, works them in us; and their being so perfectly unreasonable as they are is a proof of it. Nothing that is such can be the work of a good agent. This I know too by experience, that, like all other illusions, they exist only by force of imagination, are indebted for their prevalence to the absence of their object, and in a few moments after its appearance cease. So then this is a settled point, and the case stands thus. You will tremble as you draw near to Newport, and so shall I. But we will both recollect that there is no reason why we should; and this recollection will at least have some little effect in our favor. We will likewise both take the comfort of what we know to be true, that the tumult will soon cease, and the pleasure long survive the pain, even as long, I trust, as we ourselves shall survive it.

What you said of Maty gives me all the consolation that you intended. We both think it highly probable that you suggest the true cause of his displeasure, when you suppose him mortified at not having had a part of the translation laid before him, ere the specimen was published. The General was very much hurt, and calls his censures harsh and unreasonable. He likewise sent me a consolatory letter on the occasion, in which he took the kindest pains to heal the wound that (he supposed) I might have suffered. I am not naturally insensible, and the sensibilities that I had by nature have been wonderfully enhanced by a long series of shocks given to a frame of nerves that was never very athletic. I feel accordingly, whether painful or pleasant, in the extreme, am easily elevated, and easily cast down. The frown of the critic freezes my poetical powers, and discourages me to a degree that makes me ashamed of my own weakness. Yet I presently recover my confidence again. The half of what you so kindly say in your last would, at any time, restore my spirits; and, being said by you, is infallible. I am not ashamed to confess, that, having commenced an author, I am most abundantly desirous to succeed as such. *I have (what perhaps you little suspect me of) in my nature an infinite share of ambition.* But with it I have, at the same time, as you well know, an equal share of diffidence. To this combination of opposite qualities it has been owing that, till lately, I stole through life without undertaking anything, yet always wishing to distin-

* "Truth is strange, stranger than fiction."

guish myself. At last I ventured, ventured too in the only path that, at so late a period, was yet open to me: and am determined, if God have not determined otherwise, to work my way, through the obscurity that has been so long my portion, into notice. Everything, therefore, that seems to threaten this my favorite purpose with disappointment affects me nearly. I suppose that all ambitious minds are in the same predicament. He who seeks distinction must be sensible of disapprobation, exactly in the same proportion as he desires applause. And now, my precious cousin, I have unfolded my heart to you in this particular, without a speck of dissimulation. Some people, and good people too, would blame me. But you will not; and they (I think) would blame without just cause. We certainly do not honor God, when we bury, or when we neglect to improve, as far as we may, whatever talent he may have bestowed on us, whether it be little or much. In natural things, as well as in spiritual, it is a never-failing truth, that to him who *hath* (that is, to him who occupies what he hath diligently and so as to increase it) more shall be given. Set me down, therefore, my dear, for an industrious rhymer, so long as I shall have the ability. For in this only way is it possible for me, so far as I can see, either to honor God, or to serve man, or even to serve myself.

I rejoice to hear that Mr. Throckmorton wishes to be on a more intimate footing. I am shy, and suspect that he is not very much otherwise, and the consequence has been, that we have mutually wished an acquaintance without being able to accomplish it. Blessings on you for the hint that you dropped on the subject of the house at Weston! For the burthen of my song is—"Since we have met once again, let us never be separated, as we have been, more."

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, May 20, 1786.

My dear Friend,—About three weeks since I met your sister Chester* at Mr. Throckmorton's, and from her learned that you are at Blithfield,† and in health. Upon the encouragement of this information it is that I write now: I should not otherwise have known with certainty where to find you, or have been equally free from the fear of unseasonable intrusion. May God be with you, my friend, and give you a just measure of submission to his will, the most effectual of all remedies for the evils of this changing scene. I doubt not that he has granted you this blessing already, and may he still continue it!

Now I will talk a little about myself; for except myself, living in this *terrarum angulo*, what can I have to talk about? In a scene of perfect tranquillity and the profoundest silence, I am kicking up the dust of heroic narrative and besieging Troy again. I told you that I had almost finished the translation of the Iliad, and I verily thought so. But I was never more mistaken. By the time when I had reached the end of the poem, the first book of my version was a twelvemonth old. When I came to consider it after having laid it by so long, it did not satisfy me. I set myself to mend it, and I did so; but still it appeared to me improveable, and that nothing would so effectually secure that point as to give to the whole book a new translation. With the exception of a very few lines I have so done, and was never in my life so convinced of the soundness of Horace's advice, to publish nothing in haste; so much advantage have I derived from doing that twice which I thought I had accomplished notably at once. He indeed recommends nine years' imprisonment of your verses before you send them abroad; but the ninth part of that time is, I believe, as much as there is need of to open a man's eyes upon his own defects, and to secure him from the danger of premature self-approbation. Neither ought it to be forgotten, that nine years make so wide an interval between the cup and the lip, that a thousand things may fall out between. New engagements may occur, which may make the finishing of that which a poet has begun impossible. In nine years he may rise into a situation, or he may sink into one, utterly incompatible with his purpose. His constitution may break in nine years, and sickness may disqualify him for improving what he enterprised in the days of health. His inclination may change, and he may find some other employment more agreeable, or another poet may enter upon the same work, and get the start of him. Therefore, my friend Horace, though I acknowledge your principle to be good, I must confess that I think the practice you would ground upon it carried to an extreme. The rigor that I exercised upon the first book I intend to exercise upon all that follow, and have now actually advanced into the middle of the seventh, nowhere admitting more than one line in fifty of the first translation. You must not imagine that I had been careless and hasty in the first instance. In truth I had not; but, in rendering so excellent a poet as Homer into our language, there are so many points to be attended to, both in respect of language and numbers, that a first

* Charles Bagot, the brother of Walter, took the name of Chester on the death of Sir Charles Bagot Chester, and lived at Chicheley, not far from Weston, the seat of Mr. Throckmorton.

† He was rector of Blithfield, Staffordshire.

attempt must be fortunate indeed if it does not call loud for a second. You saw the specimen, and you saw (I am sure) one great fault in it; I mean the harshness of some of the elisions. I do not altogether take the blame of these to myself; for into some of them I was actually driven and hunted by a series of reiterated objections made by a critical friend, whose scruples and delicacies teazed me out of all my patience. But no such monsters will be found in the volume.

Your brother Chester has furnished me with Barnes's Homer, from whose notes I collect here and there some useful information, and whose fair and legible type preserves from the danger of being as blind as was my author. I saw a sister of yours at Mr. Throckmorton's, but I am not good at making myself heard across a large room, and therefore nothing passed between us. I however felt that she was my friend's sister, and much esteemed her for your sake.

Ever yours, W. C.

P. S.—The swan is called *argutus* (I suppose) *a non arguendo* and *canorus a non canendo*. But whether he be dumb or vocal, more poetical than the eagle or less, it is no matter. A feather of either, in token of your approbation and esteem, will never, you may rest assured, be an offence to me.

Cowper seems to have reserved for the tried friendship of Newton the disclosure of those secret sorrows which he so seldom intruded on others. The communications which he makes on these occasions are painfully affecting. The mind labors, and the language responds to the intensity of the inward emotion. Sorrow is often sublime and eloquent, because the source of eloquence is not so much to be found in the powers of the intellect as in the acute feelings of an ardent and sensitive heart. It is the heart that unlocks the intellect.

These remarks will prepare the reader for the following letter.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, May 20, 1786.

My dear Friend,—Within this hour arrived three sets of your new publication,† for which we sincerely thank you. We have breakfasted since they came, and consequently, as you may suppose, have neither of us had yet an opportunity to make ourselves acquainted with the contents. I shall be happy (and when I say that, I mean to be understood in the fullest and most emphatical sense of the word) if my frame of mind shall be such as may permit me to study them. But Adam's approach to the tree of life, after he had sinned, was not more effectually prohibited by the flaming sword that turned every way, than mine to its great Antitype has been now almost these thirteen years, a short interval of three or four days, which passed about this time twelvemonth, alone excepted. For what reason it is that I am thus long excluded, if I am ever again to be admitted, is known to God only. I can say but this; that if he is still my Father, this paternal severity has toward me been such as that I have reason to account it unexampled. For though others have suffered desertion, yet few, I believe, for so long a time, and perhaps none a desertion accompanied with such experiences. But they have this belonging to them, that, as they are not fit for recital, being made up merely of infernal ingredients, so neither are they susceptible of it; for I know no language in which they could be expressed. They are as truly things which it is not possible for man to utter as those were which Paul heard and saw in the third heaven. If the ladder of Christian experience reaches, as I suppose it does, to the very presence of God, it has nevertheless its foot in the abyss. And if Paul stood, as no doubt he did, in that experience of his to which I have just alluded, on the topmost round of it, I have been standing, and still stand, on the lowest, in this thirteenth year that has passed since I descended. In such a situation of mind, encompassed by the midnight of absolute despair, and a thousand times filled with unspeakable horror, I first commenced as an author. Distress drove me to it, and the impossibility of subsisting without some employment still recommends it. I am not, indeed, so perfectly hopeless as I was; but I am equally in need of an occupation, being often as much, and sometimes even more, worried than ever. I cannot amuse myself as I once could, with carpenters' or with gardeners' tools, or with squirrels and guinea-pigs. At that time I was a child. But since it has pleased God, whatever else he withholds, to restore to me a man's mind, I have put away childish things. Thus far, therefore, it is plain that I have not chosen or prescribed to myself my own way, but have been providentially led to it; perhaps I might say with equal propriety, compelled and scourged into it: for certainly, could I have made my choice, or were I permitted to make it even now, those hours which I spend in poetry I would spend with God. But it is evidently his will that I should spend them as I do, because every other way of employing them he himself continues to make impossible. If in the course of such an occupation, or by inevitable consequence of it, either my former connexions are revived or new ones occur, these things are as much a part of the

* Private correspondence. † Messiah.

dispensation as the leading points of it themselves; the effect as much as the cause. If his purposes in thus directing me are gracious, he will take care to prove them such in the issue, and in the meantime will preserve me (for he is able to do that in one condition of life as in another) from all mistakes in conduct that might prove pernicious to myself, or give reasonable offence to others. I can say it as truly as it was ever spoken—Here I am: let him do with me as seemeth him good.

At present, however, I have no connexions at which either you, I trust, or any who love me, and wish me well, have occasion to conceive alarm. Much kindness indeed I have experienced at the hands of several, some of them near relations, others not related to me at all: but I do not know that there is among them a single person from whom I am likely to catch contamination. I can say of them all with more truth than Jacob uttered when he called kid venison, "The Lord thy God brought them unto me." I could show you among them two men whose lives, though they have but little of what we call evangelical light, are ornaments to a Christian country; men who fear God more than some who even profess to love him. But I will not particularize farther on such a subject. Be they what they may, our situations are so distant, and we are likely to meet so seldom, that, were they, as they are not, persons of even exceptionable manners, their manners would have little to do with me. We correspond at present only on the subject of what passed at Troy three thousand years ago; and they are matters that, if they can do no good, will at least hurt nobody.

Your friendship for me, and the proof that I see of it in your friendly concern for my welfare on this occasion, demanded that I should be explicit. Assure yourself that I love and honor you, as upon all accounts, so especially for the interest that you take and have ever taken in my welfare, most sincerely. I wish you all happiness in your new abode, all possible success in your ministry, and much fruit of your newly published labors, and am, with Mrs. Unwin's love to yourself and Mrs. Newton,

Most affectionately yours,
My dear friend, W. C.

Of all the letters, addressed by Cowper to Newton, that we have yet laid before the reader, we consider the last to be the fullest development of the afflicting and mysterious dispensation under which he labored. These are indeed the deep waters, the sound of the terrible storm and tempest. We contemplate this state of mind with emotions of solemn awe, deep interest, and merited admiration, when we observe the spirit of patient resignation by which it is accompanied.—"Here I am," exclaims Cowper, "let him do with me as seemeth him good." To acquiesce in submissive silence, under circumstances the most opposed to natural feeling, to bear an oppressive load daily, continuously, and with little hope of intermission, and amidst this pressure and anguish of the soul to have produced writing characterised by sound judgment, exalted morality, and a train of lucid and elevated thought, is a phenomenon that must ever remain a mystery; but the poet's submission is the faith of a suffering martyr, and will finally meet with a martyr's triumphant crown.

But, after all, who does not see, in the case of Cowper, the evident marks of an aberration of mind on one particular subject, founded on the delusion of supposing himself excluded from the mercy of God, when his fear of offending him, the blameless tenor of his life, and his anxiety to render his works subservient to the amelioration of the age, prove the fallacy of the persuasion? How can a tree be corrupt which produces good fruits? How can a gracious Lord cast off those who delight in fearing and serving him? The supposition is repugnant to every just and sound view of the equity of the Divine government: God cannot act inconsistently with his own character and attributes. The Bible is the record of what He is, of his declarations to man, of his moral government, and of his dealings with his people. And what does the Bible proclaim? It tells us "God is love;" "he delighteth in mercy;" "he does not willingly afflict the children of men;" "in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." "Fear not, thou worm Jacob; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."* His moral government and the history of his dealings towards the most eminent saints is a powerful illustration of these truths. He may indeed infuse *bitter ingredients* in the cup of his children: all of them, in due time, taste the wormwood and the gall. It is a part of the covenant; the token of his love, and essential to the trial of their faith and to their purification. But that he ever administers what Cowper here painfully calls *infernal ingredients* is impossible. These elements of evil spring not from above but from below. They may occur, as in the case of Job, by a permissive Providence, but sooner or later a divine power interposes, and vindicates his own wisdom and equity. We know from various sources of information, that Cowper fully admitted the force of this reasoning, and the

* Isaiah lxiii. 9.

justness of its application in every other possible instance, himself alone excepted. The answer to this objection is that *the equity of God's moral dealings admits of no exception.* Men may change; they may act in opposition to their own principles, falsify their judgment, violate their most solemn engagements, and be influenced by the variation of time and circumstances. But this can never be true of the Divine nature. "I, the Lord, change not." "The same yesterday, to-day, and forever." "With him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning." "Have I *ever* been a wilderness unto Zion?"

We have indulged in this mode of reasoning, because it has been our lot to meet with some examples of this kind, and to have applied the argument with success. If the consolations of the Gospel, administered by an enlightened, tender, and judicious minister, formed a more prominent part in the treatment of cases of disordered intellect and depressed spirit, we feel persuaded that the instances of recovery would be far more numerous than they are found to be under existing circumstances—that suicides would be diminished, and the ills of life be borne with more submissive resignation. We consider the ambassador of Christ to be as essential as the medical practitioner. The afflicted father, recorded in the Gospel,* as having a lunatic son, "sore vexed," tried all means for his recovery, but without success. It is emphatically said, "*they could not cure him*;" everything failed. What followed? Jesus said, "*Bring him hither to me.*" The same command is still addressed to us, and there is still the same Lord, the same healing balm and antidote, and the same Almighty power and will to administer it. What was the final result? "*And the child was cured from that very hour*," or, as the narrative adds in another account of the same event,† "*Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose.*"

The miracles of Christ, recorded in the New Testament, are but so many emblems of the spiritual power and mercy that heals the infirmities of a wounded spirit.

Other opportunities will occur in the course of the ensuing history to resume the consideration of this important subject.

The strain of affectionate feeling which pervades the following letters to Lady Hesketh, is strongly characteristic of the stability of Cowper's friendships.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 25, 1786.

I have at length, my cousin, found my way into my summer abode. I believe that I described it to you some time since, and will therefore now leave it undescribed. I will only say that I am writing in a band-box, situated, at least in my account, delightfully, because it has a window on one side that opens into that orchard through which, as I am sitting here, I shall see you often pass, and which therefore I already prefer to all the orchards in the world. You do well to prepare me for all possible delays, because in this life all sorts of disappointments are possible, and I shall do well, if any such delay of your journey should happen, to practise that lesson of patience which you inculcate. But it is a lesson which, even with you as my teacher, I shall be slow to learn. Being sure however that you will not procrastinate without cause, I will make myself as easy as I can about it, and hope the best. To convince you how much I am under discipline and good advice, I will lay aside a favorite measure, influenced in doing so by nothing but the good sense of your contrary opinion. I had set my heart on meeting you at Newport; in my haste to see you once again, I was willing to overlook many awkwardnesses I could not but foresee would attend it. I put them aside so long as I only foresaw them myself, but since I find that you foresee them too, I can no longer deal so slightly with them: it is therefore determined that we meet at Olney. Much I shall feel, but I will not die if I can help it, and I beg that you will take all possible care to outlive it likewise, for I know what it is to be balked in the moment of acquisition, and should be loath to know it again.

Last Monday, in the evening, we walked to Weston, according to our usual custom. It happened, owing to a mistake of time, that we set out half an hour sooner than usual. This mistake we discovered while we were in the Wilderness: so finding that we had time before us, as they say, Mrs. Unwin proposed that we should go into the village, and take a view of the house that I had just mentioned to you. We did so, and found it such a one as in most respects would suit you well.* But Moses Brown, our vicar, who, as I told you, is in his eighty-sixth year, is not bound to die for that reason. He said himself, when he was here last summer, that he should live ten years longer, and for aught that appears so he may. In which case, for the sake of its near neighborhood to us, the vicarage has charms for me that no other place can rival. But this, and a thousand things more, shall be talked over when you come.

We have been industriously cultivating our acquaintance with our Weston neighbors since I wrote last, and they on their part have been equally diligent in the same cause. I have a notion that we shall all suit well.

* Matt. xvii. 14—18. † Mark ix. 27.

* The lodge at Weston to which Cowper removed in the November following.

I see much in them both that I admire. You know perhaps that they are Catholics.

It is a delightful bundle of praise, my cousin, that you have sent me: all jasmine and lavender. Whoever the lady is, she has evidently an admirable pen and a cultivated mind. If a person reads, it is no matter in what language, and if the mind be informed, it is no matter whether that mind belongs to a man or a woman: the taste and the judgment will receive the benefit alike in both. Long before the Task was published, I made an experiment one day, being in a frolicsome mood, upon my friend: we were walking in the garden, and conversing on a subject similar to these lines.

The few that pray at all, pray oft amiss,
And, seeking grace t' improve the present good,
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

I repeated them, and said to him with an air of *nonchalance*, "Do you recollect those lines? I have seen them somewhere, where are they?" He put on a considering face, and after some deliberation replied, "Oh, I will tell you where they must be—in the Night Thoughts." I was glad my trial turned out so well, and did not undeceive him. I mention this occurrence only in confirmation of the letter-writer's opinion, but at the same time I do assure you, on the faith of an honest man, that I never in my life designed an imitation of Young or of any other writer; for mimicry is my abhorrence, at least in poetry.

Assure yourself, my dearest cousin, that, both for your sake, since you make a point of it, and for my own, I will be as philosophically careful as possible that these fine nerves of mine shall not be beyond measure agitated when you arrive. In truth, there is much greater probability that they will be benefited, and greatly too. Joy of heart, from whatever occasion it may arise, is the best of all nervous medicines, and I should not wonder if such a turn given to my spirits should have even a lasting effect, of the most advantageous kind, upon them. You must not imagine, either, that I am on the whole in any great degree subject to nervous affections; occasionally I am, and have been these many years, much liable to dejection. But, at intervals, and sometimes for an interval of weeks, no creature would suspect it; for I have not that which commonly is a symptom of such a case belonging to me: I mean extraordinary elevation in the absence of Mr. Bluedevil. When I am in the best health, my tide of animal sprightliness flows with great equality, so that I am never at any time exalted in proportion as I am sometimes depressed. My depression has a cause, and if that cause were to cease, I should be as cheerful thenceforth, and perhaps forever, as any man need be. But, as I have often said, Mrs. Unwin shall be my expositor.

Adieu, my beloved cousin. God grant that our friendship, which, while we could see each other, never suffered a moment's interruption, and which so long a separation has not in the least abated, may glow in us to our last hour, and be renewed in a better world, there to be perpetuated forever.

For you must know, that I should not love you half so well, if I did not believe you would be my friend to eternity. There is not room enough for friendship to unfold itself in full bloom in such a nook of life as this. Therefore I am, and must and will be,

Yours forever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 29, 1786.

Thou dear, comfortable cousin, whose letters, among all that I receive, have this property peculiarly their own—that I expect them without trembling, and never find anything in them that does not give me pleasure—for which, therefore, I would take nothing in exchange that the world could give me, save and except that for which I must exchange them soon—(and happy shall I be to do so)—your own company. That indeed is delayed a little too long; to my impatience, at least, it seems so, who find the spring, backward as it is, too forward, because many of its beauties will have faded before you will have an opportunity to see them. We took our customary walk yesterday in the Wilderness at Weston, and saw, with regret, the laburnums, syringas, and guelder-roses, some of them blown, and others just upon the point of blowing, and could not help observing—all these will be gone before Lady Hesketh comes. Still, however, there will be roses, and jasmine, and honeysuckle, and shady walks, and cool alcoves, and you will partake them with us. But I want you to have a share of everything that is delightful here, and cannot bear that the advance of the season should steal away a single pleasure before you can come to enjoy it.

Every day I think of you, and almost all day long; I will venture to say, that even *you* were never so expected in your life. I called last week at the Quaker's, to see the furniture of your bed, the fame of which had reached me. It is, I assure you, superb, of printed cotton, and the subject classical. Every morning you will open your eyes on Phaeton kneeling to Apollo, and imploring his father to grant him the conduct of his chariot for a day. May your sleep be as sound as your bed will be sumptuous, and your nights, at least, will be well provided for.

I shall send you up the sixth and seventh books of the Iliad shortly, and shall address them to you. You will forward them to the General. I long to show you my workshop, and to see you sitting on the opposite side of my table. We shall be as close packed as two wax figures in an old-fashioned picture-frame. I am writing in it now. It is the place in which I fabricate all my verse in summer time. I rose an hour sooner than usual, this morning, that I might finish my sheet before breakfast, for I must write this day to the General.

The grass under my windows is all bespangled with dew-drops, and the birds are singing in the apple-trees, among the blossoms. Never poet had a more commodious oratory, in which to invoke his muse.

I have made your heart ache too often, my poor dear cousin, about my fits of dejection. Something has happened that has led me to the subject, or I would have mentioned them more sparingly. Do not suppose, or suspect, that I treat you with reserve; there is nothing in which I am concerned that you shall not be made acquainted with; but the tale is too long for a letter. I will only add, for your present satisfaction, that the cause is not exterior, that it is not within the reach of human aid, and that yet I have a hope myself, and Mrs. Unwin a strong persuasion, of its removal. I am indeed even now, and have been for a considerable time, sensible of a change for the better, and expect, with good reason, a comfortable lift from you. Guess, then, my beloved cousin, with what wishes I look forward to the time of your arrival, from whose coming I promise myself not only pleasure but peace of mind, at least an additional share of it. At present it is an uncertain and transient guest with me, but the joy with which I shall see and converse with you at Olney may perhaps make it an abiding one.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, June 4 and 5, 1786.

Ah! my cousin, you begin already to fear and quake. What a hero am I, compared with you! I have no fears of *you*, on the contrary, am as bold as a lion. I wish that your carriage were even now at the door. You should see with how much courage I would face you. But what cause have you for fear? Am I not your cousin, with whom you have wandered in the fields of Freemantle and at Bevis's Mount?—who used to read to you, laugh with you, till our sides have ached at anything or nothing? And am I in these respects at all altered? You will not find me so, but just as ready to laugh and to wander as you ever knew me. A cloud, perhaps, may come over me now and then, for a few hours, but from clouds I was never exempted. And are not you the identical cousin with whom I have performed all these feats? the very Harriet whom I saw, for the first time, at De Grey's, in Norfolk-street?* (It was on a Sunday, when you came with my uncle and aunt† to drink tea there, and I had dined there, and was just going back to Westminster.) If these things are so, and I am sure that you cannot gainsay a syllable of them all, then this consequence follows, that I do not promise myself more pleasure from your company than I shall be sure to find. Then you are my cousin, in whom I always delighted, and in whom I doubt not that I shall delight, even to my latest hour. But this wicked coach-maker has sunk my spirits. What a miserable thing it is to depend, in any degree, for the accomplishment of a wish, and that wish so fervent, on the punctuality of a creature, who, I suppose, was never punctual in his life! Do tell him, my dear, in order to quicken him, that if he performs his promise, he shall make my coach, when I want one, and that if he performs it not, I will most assuredly employ some other man.

The Throckmortons sent us a note to invite us to dinner: we went, and a very agreeable day we had. They made no fuss with us, which I was heartily glad to see, for where I give trouble I am sure that I cannot be welcome. Themselves, and their chaplain, and we, were all the party. After dinner we had much cheerful and pleasant talk, the particulars of which might not perhaps be so entertaining upon paper, therefore, all but one I will omit, and that I will mention only because it will of itself be sufficient to give you an insight into their opinion on a very important subject—their own religion. I happened to say that in all professions and trades mankind affected an air of mystery. Physicians, I observed, in particular, were objects of that remark, who persist in prescribing in Latin, many times, no doubt, to the hazard of a patient's life through the ignorance of an apothecary. Mr. Throckmorton assented to what I said, and, turning to his chaplain, to my infinite surprise observed to him, "*That is just as absurd as our praying in Latin.*" I could have hugged him for his liberality and freedom from bigotry, but thought it rather more decent to let the matter pass without any visible notice. I therefore heard it with pleasure, and kept my pleasure to myself. The two ladies in the meantime were *tête-à-tête* in the drawing-room. Their conversation turned principally (as I afterwards learned

* This Mr. De Grey has been already mentioned. He rose to the dignity of Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and was finally created Lord Walsingham.

† Ashley Cowper and his wife, Lady Hesketh's father and mother.

from Mrs. Unwin) on a most delightful topic, viz., myself. In the first place, Mrs. Throckmorton admired my book, from which she quoted by heart more than I could repeat, though I so lately wrote it. In short, my dear, I cannot proceed to relate what she said of the book and the book's author, for that abominable modesty that I cannot even yet get rid of. Let it suffice to say, that you, who are disposed to love everybody who speaks kindly of your cousin, will certainly love Mrs. Throckmorton, when you shall be told what she said of him, and that you *will* be told is equally certain, because it depends on Mrs. Unwin. It is a very convenient thing to have a Mrs. Unwin, who will tell you many a good long story for me, that I am not able to tell for myself. I am however not at all in arrears to our neighbors in matter of admiration and esteem, but the more I know the more I like them, and have nearly an affection for them both. I am delighted that "The Task" has so large a share of the approbation of your sensible Suffolk friend.

I received yesterday from the General another letter of T. S. An unknown auxiliary having started up in my behalf, I believe I shall leave the business of answering to him, having no leisure myself for controversy. He lies very open to a very effectual reply.

My dearest cousin, adieu! I hope to write to you once more before we meet. But oh! this coach-maker! and oh! this holiday week!

Yours, with impatient desire to see you,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, June 9, 1786.

My dear Friend,—The little time that I can devote to any other purpose than that of poetry, is, as you may suppose, stolen. Homer is urgent. Much is done, but much remains undone, and no school-boy is more attentive to the performance of his daily task than I am. You will therefore excuse me, if, at present, I am both unfrequent and short.

The paper tells me that the Chancellor has relapsed, and I am truly sorry to hear it. The first attack was dangerous, but a second must be more formidable still. It is not probable that I should ever hear from him again if he survive; yet of the much that I should have felt for him, had our connexion never been interrupted, I still feel much. Everybody will feel the loss of a man, whose abilities have made him of such general importance.

I correspond again with Colman, and upon the most friendly footing, and find in his instance, and in some others, that an intimate intercourse, which has been only casually suspended, not forfeited on either side by outrage, is capable not only of revival but improvement.

I had a letter some time since from your sister Fanny, that gave me great pleasure. Such notices from old friends are always pleasant, and of such pleasures I have received many lately. They refresh the remembrance of early days, and make me young again. The noble institution of the Nonsense Club* will be forgotten when we are gone who composed it, but I often think of your most heroic line, written at one of our meetings, and especially think of it when I am translating Homer,

"To whom replied the Devil yard-long-tail'd."

There never was anything more truly Grecian than that triple epithet, and, were it possible to introduce it into either Iliad or Odyssey, I should certainly steal it. I am now flushed with expectation of Lady Hesketh, who spends the summer with us. We hope to see her next week. We have found admirable lodgings both for her and her suite, and a Quaker in this town, still more admirable than they, who, as if he loved her as much as I do, furnishes them for her with real elegance.

W. C.

The period so long and so fervently expected at length approached. Lady Hesketh arrived at Olney in the middle of June, 1786. These two relatives and friends met together, after a separation of twenty-three years, anxious to testify to each other that time, "that great innovator," had left inviolate the claims of a friendship, which absence could not impair, because it was founded on esteem, and strengthened by the most endearing recollections. It does not always happen, when the mind has indulged in the anticipation of promised joy, that the result corresponds with the expectation. But in the present case the cherished hope was amply realized, though its first emotions were trying to the sensitive frame of Cowper. He was truly delighted in welcoming his endeared relative; and, as his own house was inadequate for her reception, Lady Hesketh was comfortably lodged in the vicarage of Olney; a situation so near to his own residence, and so eligible from the private communication between their two houses, as to admit of all the facilities of frequent intercourse and union.

The influence of this event proved beneficial to the health and spirits of Cowper. The highly cultivated mind of Lady Hesketh, the charm of her manners, and her en-

* The club designated by this humorous title, was composed of Westminster men, and included among its members, Bonnell Thornton, Colman, Lloyd, Hill, Bensley, and Cowper. They were accustomed to meet together for the purpose of literary relaxation and amusement.

dearing qualities, called forth the development of kindred feelings in his own character. As she was furnished with a carriage and horses, he was gradually induced to avail himself of this opportunity of exploring the neighborhood, and of multiplying his innocent enjoyments. His life had been so retired at Olney, that he had not even extended his excursions to the neighboring town of Newport-Pagnell in the course of many years; but the convenience of a carriage led him, in August, to visit Mr. Bull, who resided there—the friend from whose assiduous attention he derived so much benefit in a season of mental depression. It was at his suggestion, as we have already stated, that Cowper engaged in the translation of Madame Guion's Poems. As it is some time since we have had occasion to refer to this justly esteemed character, we think the following short letter, addressed to him by Cowper, will exhibit an amusing portrait of his character and habits.

"Mon aimable and très cher Ami,—It is not in the power of chaises, or chariots, to carry you where my affections will not follow you; if I heard that you were gone to finish your days in the moon, I should not love you the less; but should contemplate the place of your abode, as often as it appeared in the heavens, and say—Farewell, my friend, forever! Lost! but not forgotten! Live happy in thy lantern, and smoke the remainder of thy pipes in peace! Thou art rid of earth, at least of all its cares, and so far can I rejoice in thy removal; and as to the cares that are to be found in the moon, I am resolved to suppose them lighter than those below—heavier they can hardly be."

We also add the following beautiful description of a thunder-storm, in a letter to the same person, expressed with the feelings of a poet, that knew how to embody the sublime in language of corresponding grandeur.

"I was always an admirer of thunder-storms, even before I knew whose voice I heard in them; but especially an admirer of thunder rolling over the great waters. There is something singularly majestic in the sound of it at sea, where the eye and the ear have uninterrupted opportunity of observation, and the concavity above being made spacious reflects it with more advantage. I have consequently envied you your situation, and the enjoyment of those refreshing breezes that belong to it. We have indeed been regaled with some of these bursts of ethereal music. The peals have been as loud, by the report of a gentleman who lived many years in the West Indies, as were ever heard in those islands, and the flashes as splendid. But when the thunder preaches, an horizon bounded by the ocean is the only sounding-board."*

The visit of Lady Hesketh to Olney led to a very favorable change in the residence of Cowper. He had now passed nineteen years in a scene that was far from being adapted to his taste and feelings. The house which he inhabited looked on a market-place, and once, in a season of illness, he was so apprehensive of being incommoded by the bustle of a fair, that he requested to lodge for a single night under the roof of his friend Mr. Newton, where he was induced, by the more comfortable situation of the vicarage, to remain fourteen months. His intimacy with this excellent and highly esteemed character was so great that Mr. Newton has described it in the following remarkable terms, in memoirs of the poet, which affection induced him to begin, but which the troubles and infirmities of very advanced life obliged him to relinquish.

"For nearly twelve years we were seldom separated for seven hours at a time, when we were awake, and at home: the first six I passed in daily admiring, and aiming to imitate him: during the second six, I walked pensively with him in the valley of the shadow of death."

Mr. Newton also bears the following honorable testimony to the pious and benevolent habits of Cowper. "He loved the poor. He often visited them in their cottages, conversed with them in the most condescending manner, sympathized with them, counselled and comforted them in their distresses; and those who were seriously disposed were often cheered and animated by his prayers!" These are pleasing memorials, for we believe that the cottages of the poor will ever be found to be the best school for the improvement of the heart. After the removal of Mr. Newton to London, and the departure of Lady Austen, Olney had no particular attractions for Cowper; and Lady Hesketh was happy in promoting the project, which had occurred to him, of removing with Mrs. Unwin to the near and picturesque village of Weston—a scene highly favorable to his health and amusement. For, with a very comfortable

* There are few countries where a thunder-storm presents so sublime and terrific a spectacle as in Switzerland. The writer remembers once witnessing a scene of this kind in the Castle of Chillon, on the banks of the Lake of Geneva. The whole atmosphere seemed to be overcharged with the electric fluid. A stillness, like that of death, prevailed, forming a striking contrast with the tumult of the elements that shortly succeeded. The lightning at length burst forth, in vivid coruscations, like a flame of fire, darting upon the agitated waters; while the rain descended in torrents. Peals of thunder followed, rolling over the wide expanse of the lake, and re-echoing along the whole range of the Alps to the left; and then taking a complete circuit, finally passed over to the Jura, on the opposite side, impressing the mind with indescribable awe and admiration.

house, it afforded him a garden, and a field of considerable extent, which he delighted to cultivate and embellish. With these he had advantages still more desirable—easy, and constant access to the spacious and tranquil pleasure-grounds of his accomplished and benevolent landlord, Mr. Throckmorton, whose neighboring house supplied him with an intercourse peculiarly suited to his gentle and delicate spirit.

Cowper removed from Olney to Weston in November, 1786. The course of his life, in his new situation, (the scene so happily embellished by his Muse,) will be best described by the subsequent series of his letters to that amiable relative, to whom he considered himself chiefly indebted for this improvement in his domestic scenery and comforts. With these will be connected a selection of his letters to other friends, and particularly the letters addressed to one of his most intimate correspondents, Samuel Rose, Esq., who commenced his acquaintance in the beginning of the year 1787. Another endeared character will also be introduced to the notice of the reader, whose affectionate and unremitting attention to the poet, when he most needed these kind and tender offices, will ever give him a just title to the gratitude and love of the admirers of Cowper: we allude to the late Rev. Dr. Johnson.

We now resume the correspondence.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, June 19, 1786.

My dear cousin's arrival has, as it could not fail to do, made us happier than we ever were at Olney. Her great kindness in giving us her company is a cordial that I shall feel the effect of not only while she is here, but while I live.

Olney will not be much longer the place of our habitation. At a village two miles distant we have hired a house of Mr. Throckmorton, a much better than we occupy at present, and yet not more expensive. It is situated very near to our most agreeable landlord and his agreeable pleasure-grounds. In him, and in his wife, we shall find such companions, as will always make the time pass pleasantly while they are in the country, and his grounds will afford us good air and good walking-room in the winter; two advantages which we have not enjoyed at Olney, where I have no neighbor with whom I can converse, and where, seven months in the year, I have been imprisoned by dirty and impassable ways, till both my health and Mrs. Unwin's have suffered materially.

Homer is ever importunate, and will not suffer me to spend half the time with my distant friends that I would gladly give them.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, June 22, 1786.

My dear Friend,—I am not glad that I am obliged to apologize for an interval of three weeks that have elapsed since the receipt of yours; but, not having it in my power to write oftener than I do, I am glad that my reason is such a one as you admit. In truth, my time is very much occupied; and the more because I not only have a long and laborious work in hand, for such it would prove at any rate, but because I make it a point to bestow my utmost attention upon it, and to give it all the finishing that the most scrupulous accuracy can command. As soon as breakfast is over, I retire to my nutshell of a summer-house, which is my verse-manufactory, and here I abide seldom less than three hours, and not often more. In the afternoon I return to it again; and all the daylight that follows, except what is devoted to a walk, is given to Homer. It is well for me that a course which is now become necessary is so much my choice. The regularity of it indeed has been, in the course of this last week, a little interrupted by the arrival of my dear cousin, Lady Hesketh; but with the new week I shall, as they say, turn over a new leaf, and put myself under the same rigorous discipline as before. Something, and not a little, is due to the feelings that the sight of the kindest relation that ever man was blessed with must needs give birth to, after so long a separation. But she, whose anxiety for my success is I believe even greater than my own, will take care that I shall not play truant and neglect my proper business. It was an observation of a sensible man, whom I knew well in ancient days, (I mean when I was very young,) that people are never in reality happy when they boast much of being so. I feel myself accordingly well content to say, without any enlargement on the subject, that an inquirer after happiness might travel far, and not find a happier trio than meet every day either in our parlor, or in the parlor at the vicarage. I will not say that mine is not occasionally somewhat dashed with the sable hue of those notions concerning myself and my situation, that have occupied or rather possessed me so long: but, on the other hand, I can also affirm that my cousin's affectionate behavior to us both, the sweetness of her temper, and the sprightliness of her conversation, relieve me in no small degree from the presence of them.

Mrs. Unwin is greatly pleased with your Sermons; and has told me so repeatedly; and the pleasure that they have given her awaits me also in due time, as I am well and confidently assured: both because the subject of them is the greatest and the most in-

* Private correspondence.

teresting that can fall under the pen of any writer, and because no writer can be better qualified to discuss it judiciously and feelingly than yourself. The third set with which you favored us we destined to Lady Hesketh; and, in so disposing of them, are inclined to believe that we shall not err far from the mark at which you yourself directed them.

Our affectionate remembrances attend yourself and Mrs. Newton, to which you acquired an everlasting right while you dwelt under the roof where we dined yesterday. It is impossible that we should set our foot over the threshold of the vicarage without recollecting all your kindness.

Yours, my dear Friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, July 3, 1786.

My dear William,—After a long silence I begin again. A day given to my friends is a day taken from Homer; but to such an interruption now and then occurring I have no objection. Lady Hesketh is, as you observe, arrived, and has been with us near a fortnight. She pleases everybody, and is pleased, in her turn, with everything she finds at Olney, is always cheerful and sweet-tempered, and knows no pleasure equal to that of communicating pleasure to us and to all around her. This disposition in her is the more comfortable, because it is not the humor of the day, a sudden flash of benevolence and good spirits occasioned merely by a change of scene, but it is her natural turn, and has governed all her conduct ever since I knew her first. We are consequently happy in her society, and shall be happier still to have you partake with us in our joy. I am fond of the sound of bells, but was never more pleased with those of Olney than when they rang her into her new habitation. It is a compliment that our performers upon those instruments have never paid to any other personage (Lord Dartmouth excepted) since we knew the town. In short, she is, as she ever was, my pride and my joy, and I am delighted with everything that means to do her honor. Her first appearance was too much for me; my spirits, instead of being gently raised, as I had inadvertently supposed they would be, broke down with me under the pressure of too much joy, and left me flat, or rather melancholy, throughout the day, to a degree that was mortifying to myself and alarming to her. But I have made amends for this failure since, and in point of cheerfulness have far exceeded her expectations, for she knew that sable had been my suit for many years.

And now I shall communicate news that will give you pleasure. When you first contemplated the front of our abode, you were shocked. In your eyes it had the appearance of a prison, and you sighed at the thought that your mother lived in it. Your view of it was not only just, but prophetic. It had not only the aspect of a place built for the purposes of incarceration, but has actually served that purpose through a long, long period, and we have been the prisoners. But a jail-delivery is at hand. The bolts and bars are to be loosed, and we shall escape. A very different mansion, both in point of appearance and accommodation, expects us, and the expense of living in it not greater than we are subjected to in this. It is situated at Weston, one of the prettiest villages in England, and belongs to Mr. Throckmorton. We all three dine with him to-day by invitation, and shall survey it in the afternoon, point out the necessary repairs, and finally adjust the treaty. I have my cousin's promise that she will never let another year pass without a visit to us, and the house is large enough to take us and our suite, and her also, with as many of hers as she shall choose to bring. The change will, I hope, prove advantageous both to your mother and me in all respects. Here we have no neighborhood; there we shall have most agreeable neighbors in the Throckmortons. Here we have a bad air in winter, impregnated with the fishy-smelling fumes of the marsh miasma; there we shall breathe in an atmosphere untainted. Here we are confined from September to March, and sometimes longer; there we shall be upon the very verge of pleasure-grounds in which we can always ramble, and shall not wade through almost impassable dirt to get at them. Both your mother's constitution and mine have suffered materially, by such close and long confinement, and it is high time, unless we intend to retreat into the grave, that we should seek out a more wholesome residence. So far is well, the rest is left to Heaven.

I have hardly left myself room for an answer to your queries concerning my friend John and his studies. I should recommend the Civil War of Cæsar, because he wrote it who ranks, I believe, as the best writer, as well as soldier, of his day. There are books (I know not what they are, but you do, and can easily find them) that will inform him clearly of both the civil and military management of the Romans, the several officers, I mean, in both departments, and what was the peculiar province of each. The study of some such book would, I should think, prove a good introduction to that of Livy, unless you have a Livy with notes to that effect. A want of intelligence in those points has heretofore made the Roman history very dark and difficult to me; therefore I thus advise.

Yours ever, W. C.

The following letter contains some particulars relative to his version of Homer.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, July 4, 1786.

I rejoice, my dear friend, that you have at last received my proposals, and most cordially thank you for all your labors in my service. I have friends in the world, who, knowing that I am apt to be careless when left to myself, are determined to watch over me with a jealous eye upon this occasion. The consequence will be, that the work will be better executed, but more tardy in the production. To them I owe it, that my translation, as fast as it proceeds, passes under the revisal of a most accurate discerner of all blemishes. I know not whether I told you before, or now tell you for the first time, that I am in the hands of a very extraordinary person. He is intimate with my bookseller, and voluntarily offered his service. I was at first doubtful whether to accept it or not, but, finding that my friends abovesaid were not to be satisfied on any other terms, though myself a perfect stranger to the man and his qualifications, except as he was recommended by Johnson, I at length consented, and have since found great reason to rejoice that I did. I called him an extraordinary person, and such he is. For he is not only versed in Homer, and accurate in his knowledge of the Greek to a degree that entitles him to that appellation; but, though a foreigner, is a perfect master of our language, and has exquisite taste in English poetry. By his assistance I have improved many passages, supplied many oversights, and corrected many mistakes, such as will of course escape the most diligent and attentive laborer in such a work. I ought to add, because it affords the best assurance of his zeal and fidelity, that he does not toil for hire, nor will accept of any premium, but has entered on this business merely for his amusement. In the last instance, my sheets will pass through the hands of our old schoolfellow Colman, who has engaged to correct the press, and make any little alterations that he may see expedient. With all this precaution, little as I intended it once, I am now well satisfied. Experience has convinced me that other eyes than my own are necessary, in order that so long and arduous a task may be finished as it ought, and may neither discredit me nor mortify and disappoint my friends. You, who I know interest yourself much and deeply in my success, will, I dare say, be satisfied with it too. Pope had many aids, and he who follows Pope ought not to walk alone.

Though I announce myself by my very undertaking to be one of Homer's most enraptured admirers, I am not a blind one. Perhaps the speech of Achilles, given in my specimen, is, as you hint, rather too much in the moralizing strain to suit so young a man and of so much fire. But, whether it be or not, in the course of the close application that I am forced to give my author I discover inadvertences not a few; some perhaps that have escaped even the commentators themselves, or perhaps, in the enthusiasm of their idolatry, they resolved that they should pass for beauties. Homer, however, say what they will, was man; and in all the works of man, especially in a work of such length and variety, many things will of necessity occur that might have been better. Pope and Addison had a Dennis, and Dennis, if I mistake not, held up as he has been to scorn and detestation, was a sensible fellow, and passed some censures upon both those writers, that, had they been less just, would have hurt them less. Homer had his Zoilus, and perhaps, if we knew all that Zoilus said, we should be forced to acknowledge that, sometimes at least, he had reason on his side. But it is dangerous to find any fault at all with what the world is determined to esteem faultless.

I rejoice, my dear friend, that you enjoy some composure and cheerfulness of spirits; may God preserve and increase to you so great a blessing!

I am affectionately and truly yours,

W. C.

Cowper again resumes the subject of his painful dispensation, in the following letter to Newton.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Aug. 5, 1786.

My dear Friend,—You have heard of our intended removal. The house that is to receive us is in a state of preparation, and, when finished, will be both smarter and more commodious than our present abode. But the circumstance that recommends it chiefly is its situation. Long confinement in the winter, and, indeed, for the most part in the autumn too, has hurt us both. A gravel-walk, thirty yards long, affords but indifferent scope to the locomotive faculty: yet it is all that we have had to move in for eight months in the year, during thirteen years that I have been a prisoner. Had I been confined in the Tower, the battlements of it would have furnished me with a larger space. You say well, that there was a time when I was happy at Olney; and I am now as happy at Olney as I expect to be anywhere without the presence of God. Change of situation is with me no otherwise an object than as both Mrs. Unwin's health and mine may happen to be concerned in it. A fever of the slow and spirit-oppressing kind seems to belong to all,

* Private correspondence.

except the natives, who have dwelt in Olney many years; and the natives have putrid fevers. Both they and we, I believe, are immediately indebted for our respective maladies to an atmosphere encumbered with raw vapors, issuing from flooded meadows; and we in particular, perhaps, have fared the worse for sitting so often, and sometimes for months, over a cellar filled with water.—These ills we shall escape in the uplands; and, as we may reasonably hope, of course, their consequences. But, as for happiness, he that has once had communion with his Maker, must be more frantic than ever I was yet, if he can dream of finding it at a distance from Him. I no more expect happiness at Weston than here, or than I should expect it in company with felons and outlaws in the hold of a ballast-lighter. Animal spirits, however, have their value, and are especially desirable to him who is condemned to carry a burthen, which, at any rate, will tire him, but which, without their aid, cannot fail to crush him. The dealings of God with me are to myself utterly unintelligible. I have never met, either in books or in conversation, with an experience at all similar to my own. More than a twelvemonth has passed since I began to hope that, having walked the whole breadth of the bottom of this Red Sea, I was beginning to climb the opposite shore, and I prepared to sing the song of Moses. But I have been disappointed; those hopes have been blasted; those comforts have been wrested from me. I could not be so duped, even by the arch-enemy himself, as to be made to question the divine nature of them; but I have been made to believe, (which, you will say, is being duped still more) that God gave them to me in derision and took them away in vengeance. Such, however, is, and has been, my persuasion many a long day, and when I shall think on that subject more comfortably, or, as you will be inclined to tell me, more rationally and scripturally, I know not. In the meantime, I embrace with alacrity every alleviation of my case, and with the more alacrity, because whatsoever proves a relief of my distress is a cordial to Mrs. Unwin, whose sympathy with me, through the whole of it, has been such that, despair excepted, her burthen has been as heavy as mine. Lady Hesketh, by her affectionate behavior, the cheerfulness of her conversation, and the constant sweetness of her temper, has cheered us both, and Mrs. Unwin not less than me. By her help we get change of air and of scene, though still resident at Olney, and by her means have intercourse with some families in this country with whom, but for her, we could never have been acquainted. Her presence here would, at any time, even in my happiest days, have been a comfort to me, but in the present day I am doubly sensible of its value. She leaves nothing unsaid, nothing undone, that she thinks will be conducive to our well-being; and, so far as she is concerned, I have nothing to wish but that I could believe her sent hither in mercy to myself,—then I should be thankful.

I am, my dear friend, with Mrs. Unwin's love to Mrs. N. and yourself, hers and yours, as ever, W. C.

Having so recently considered the peculiar circumstances of Cowper's depression, we shall not further advert to it than to state, on the authority of John Higgins, Esq., of Turvey, who, at that time, enjoyed frequent opportunities of observing his manner and habits, that there was no perceptible appearance of his laboring under so oppressive a malady. On the contrary, his spirits, as far as outward appearances testified, were remarkably cheerful, and sometimes even gay and sportive. In a letter to Mrs. King, which will subsequently appear, will be found a remark to the same effect.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Olney, Aug. 24, 1786.

My dear Friend,—I catch a minute by the tail and hold it fast while I write to you. The moment it is fled I must go to breakfast. I am still occupied in refining and polishing, and shall this morning give the finishing hand to the seventh book. F—— does me the honor to say that the most difficult and most interesting parts of the poem are admirably rendered. But, because he did not express himself equally pleased with the more pedestrian parts of it, my labor therefore has been principally given to the dignification of them; not but that I have retouched considerably, and made better still the best. In short, I hope to make it all of a piece, and shall exert myself to the utmost to secure that desirable point. A story-teller, so very circumstantial as Homer, must of necessity present us often with much matter in itself capable of no other embellishment than purity of diction and harmony of versification can give to it. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* For our language, unless it be very severely chastised, has not the terseness, nor our measure the music of the Greek. But I shall not fail through want of industry.

We are likely to be very happy in our connexion with the Throckmortons. His reserve and mine wear off; and he talks with great pleasure of the comfort that he proposes to himself from our winter evening conversations. His purpose seems to be that we should spend them alternately with each other. Lady Hesketh transcribes for me at present. When she is gone, Mrs. Throckmorton takes up that business, and will be

my lady of the ink-bottle for the rest of the winter. She solicited herself that office.

Believe me, my dear William,
Truly yours, W. C.

Mr. Throckmorton will (I doubt not) procure Lord Petre's name, if he can, without any hint from me. He could not interest himself more in my success than he seems to do. Could he get the Pope to subscribe, I should have him, and should be glad of him and the whole conclave.

The following letters are without a date; nor do we know to what period they refer. We insert them in the order in which we find them.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear Friend,—You are my mahogany box, with a slip in the lid of it, to which I commit my productions of the lyric kind, in perfect confidence that they are safe, and will go no farther. All who are attached to the jingling art have this peculiarity, that they would find no pleasure in the exercise, had they not one friend at least to whom they might publish what they have composed. If you approve my Latin, and your wife and sister my English, this, together with the approbation of your mother, is fame enough for me.

He who cannot look forward with comfort must find what comfort he can in looking backward. Upon this principle I the other day sent my imagination upon a trip thirty years behind me. She was very obedient and very swift of foot, presently performed her journey, and at last set me down in the sixth form at Westminster. I fancied myself once more a school-boy, a period of life in which, if I had never tasted true happiness, I was at least equally unacquainted with its contrary. No manufacturer of waking dreams ever succeeded better in his employment than I do. I can weave such a piece of tapestry, in a few minutes, as not only has all the charms of reality, but is embellished also with a variety of beauties, which, though they never existed, are more captivating than any that ever did:—accordingly, I was a school-boy, in high favor with the master, received a silver groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form, for the admiration of all who were able to understand it. Do you wish to see this highly applauded performance? It follows on the other side.

[*Torn off.*]*

By way of compensation, we subjoin some verses addressed to a young lady, at the request of Mr. Unwin, to whom he thus writes:—

"I have endeavored to comply with your request, though I am not good at writing upon a given subject. Your mother however comforts me by her approbation, and I steer myself in all that I produce by her judgment If she does not understand me at the first reading, I am sure the lines are obscure and always alter them; if she laughs, I know it is not without reason; and if she says, "That's well, it will do," I have no fear lest anybody else should fine fault with it. She is my lord chamberlain, who licenses all I write.

TO MISS C——, ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

How many between east and west
Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
The day that gave them birth!

Not so when Stella's natal morn
Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born,
And wish her born once more!

If you like it, use it: if not, you know the remedy. It is serious, yet epigrammatic—like a bishop at a ball! W. C.

It is remarkable, that the laudable efforts which are now making to enforce the better observance of the Lord's day, to diminish the temptations to perjury by the unnecessary multiplication of oaths, and to arrest the progress of the vice of drunkenness, appear from the following letter to have been anticipated nearly fifty years since, by the Rev. William Unwin. Deeply impressed with a sense of the extent and enormity of these national sins, his conscientious mind (always seeking opportunities for doing good) led him to urge the employment of Cowper's pen in the correction of these evils. What he suggested, as we believe, was as follows, viz., to draw up a memorial or representation on this subject to the bench of bishops, as the constituted guardians of public morals, and thus to call forth their united exertions; secondly, to awaken the public mind to the magnitude of these crimes, and, finally, to obtain some legislative enactment for their prevention.

We now insert Cowper's reply to the proposition of his friend Mr. Unwin.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear Friend,—I am sensibly mortified at finding myself obliged to disappoint you: but, though I have had many thoughts upon the subjects you propose to my consideration, I have had none that have been favorable to the undertaking. I applaud your pur-

* This jeu d'esprit has never been found, notwithstanding the most diligent inquiry.

pose, for the sake of the principle from which it springs, but I look upon the evils you mean to animadvert upon as too obstinate and inveterate ever to be expelled by the means you mention. The very persons to whom you would address your remonstrance are themselves sufficiently aware of their enormity; years ago, to my knowledge, they were frequently the topics of conversations at polite tables; they have been frequently mentioned in both houses of parliament; and, I suppose, there is hardly a member of either who would not immediately assent to the necessity of a reformation, were it proposed to him in a reasonable way. But there it stops; and there it will forever stop, till the majority are animated with a zeal in which they are at present deplorably defective. A religious man is unfeignedly shocked when he reflects upon the prevalence of such crimes; a moral man must needs be so in a degree, and will affect to be much more so than he is. But how many do you suppose there are among our worthy representatives that come under either of these descriptions? If all were such, yet to new model the police of the country, which must be done in order to make even unavoidable perjury less frequent, were a task they would hardly undertake, on account of the great difficulty that would attend it. Government is too much interested in the consumption of malt liquor to reduce the number of venders. Such plausible pleas may be offered in defence of travelling on Sundays, especially by the trading part of the world, as the whole bench of bishops would find it difficult to overrule. And with respect to the violation of oaths, till a certain name is more generally respected than it is at present, however such persons as yourself may be grieved at it, the legislature are never likely to lay it to heart. I do not mean, nor would by any means attempt, to discourage you in so laudable an enterprise, but such is the light in which it appears to me, that I do not feel the least spark of courage qualifying or prompting me to embark in it myself. An exhortation therefore written by me, by hopeless, desponding me, would be flat, insipid, and uninteresting; and disgrace the cause instead of serving it. If, after what I have said, however, you still retain the same sentiments, *Macte esto virtute tuâ*, there is nobody better qualified than yourself, and may your success prove that I despaired of it without a reason.

Adieu,

My dear friend. W. C.

Cowper, it seems, declined his friend's proposal, and was by no means sanguine in his hopes of a remedy. The reasons he assigns are sufficient to deter the generality of mankind. Still there are men always raised up by the providence of God, in his own appointed time—endowed from above with qualifications necessary for great enterprises—distinguished too by a perseverance that no toil can weary, and which no opposition can divert from its purpose, because they are inwardly supported by the integrity of their motives, and by a deep conviction of the importance of their object. To men of this ethereal stamp, trials are but an incentive to exertion, because they never fail to see through those besetting difficulties, which obstruct the progress of all good undertakings, the final accomplishment of all their labors.

Let no man despair of success in a righteous cause. Let him well conceive his plan and mature it: let him gain all the aid that can be derived from the counsel of wise and reflecting minds; and, above all, let him implore the illuminating influences of that Holy Spirit, which can alone impart what all want, "the wisdom that is from above," which is "pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of good fruits;" let him be simple in his view, holy in his purpose, zealous, prudent, and persevering in his pursuit; and we feel no hesitation in saying, *that man will be* "*blessed in his deed.*" There are no difficulties, if his object be practicable, and prosecuted in a right spirit, that he may not hope to conquer; no corrupt passions of men over which he may not finally triumph, because there is a Divine Power that can level the highest mountains and exalt the lowest valleys, and because it is recorded for our consolation and instruction: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."*

With respect to the more immediate subject of Cowper's letter, so far as it is applicable to modern times, we must confess that we are sanguine in our hopes of improvement, founded on the increasing moral spirit of the times, and the Divine agency, now so visibly interposing in the affairs of men. Every abuse will progressively receive its appropriate and counteracting remedy. The Lord's day will be rescued from gross profanation, and the claims of the revenue be compelled to yield to the weight and authority of public feeling. How just and forcible is the following portrait drawn by the Muse of Cowper!

"The excise is fattened with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,
For ever dribbling out their base contents,

* Exodus, xiii. 21, 22.

Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriously drunk obey the important call!
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more."
The Task, Book IV.

We know not to what event the following letter refers, as it is without any date to guide us. It may probably relate to the period of Lord George Gordon's riots. We insert it as we find it.*

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Though we live in a nook, and the world is quite unconscious that there are any such beings in it as ourselves, yet we are not unconcerned about what passes in it. The present awful crisis, big with the fate of England, engages much of our attention. The action is probably over by this time, and though we know it not, the grand question is decided, whether the war shall roar in our once peaceful fields, or whether we shall still only hear of it at a distance. I can compare the nation to no similitude more apt than that of an ancient castle, that had been for days assaulted by the battering-ram. It was long before the stroke of that engine made any sensible impression, but the continual repetition at length communicated a slight tremor to the wall; the next, and the next, and the next blow increased it. Another shock puts the whole mass in motion, from the top to the foundation: it bends forward, and is every moment driven farther from the perpendicular; till at last the decisive blow is given, and down it comes. Every million that has been raised within the last century, has had an effect upon the constitution like that of a blow from the aforesaid ram upon the aforesaid wall. The impulse becomes more and more important, and the impression it makes is continually augmented; unless therefore something extraordinary intervenes to prevent it—you will find the consequence at the end of my simile.

Yours, W. C.

The letter which we next insert, is curious and interesting, as it contains a critique on the works of Churchill, whose style Cowper's is supposed to resemble, in its nervous strength and pungency. He calls him, "the great Churchill."† One of his productions, not here mentioned, was entitled the Rosciad, containing strictures on the theatrical performers of that day, who trembled at his censures, or were elated by his praise. He has passed along the stream, and has ceased to be read, though once a popular writer. It is much to be lamented that his habits were irregular, his domestic duties violated, and his life at length shortened by intemperance. The reader may form an estimate of his poetical pretensions from the judgment here passed upon them by Cowper.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear William,—How apt we are to deceive ourselves where self is in question! You say I am in your debt, and I accounted you in mine: a mistake to which you must attribute my arrears, if indeed I owe you any, for I am not backward to write where the uppermost thought is welcome.

I am obliged to you for all the books you have occasionally furnished me with: I did not indeed read many of Johnson's Classics—those of established reputation are so fresh in my memory, though many years have intervened since I made them my companions, that it was like reading what I read yesterday over again; and, as to the minor Classics, I did not think them worth reading at all. I tasted most of them, and did not like them: it is a great thing to be indeed a poet, and does not happen to more than one man in a century. Churchill, the great Churchill, deserved the name of poet—I have read him twice, and some of his pieces three times over, and the last time with more pleasure than the first. The pitiful scribbler of his life seems to have undertaken that task, for which he was entirely unqualified, merely because it afforded him an opportunity to traduce him. He has inserted in it but one anecdote of consequence, for which he refers you to a novel, and introduces the story with doubts about the truth of it. But his barrenness as a biographer I could forgive, if the simpleton had not thought himself a judge of his writings, and, under the erroneous influence of that thought informs his reader that Gotham, Independence,

* Men who are of sufficient celebrity to entitle their letters to the honor of future publication would do well in never omitting to attach a date to them. The neglect of this precaution, on the part of the Rev. Legh Richmond, led to much perplexity.

† Cowper was an admirer of Churchill, and is thought to have formed his style on the model of that writer. But he is now no longer "the *great* Churchill." The causes of his reputation have been the occasion of its decline. His productions are founded on the popular yet evanescent topics of the time, which have ceased to create interest. He who wishes to survive in the memory of future ages must possess, not only the attribute of commanding genius, but be careful to employ it on subjects of abiding importance. His life was characterised by singular imprudence, and by habits of gross vice and intemperance. A preacher by profession, and a rake in practice, he abandoned the church, or rather was compelled to resign its functions. Gifted with a vigorous fancy, and superior powers, he prostituted them to the purposes of political faction, and became the associate and friend of Wilkes. A bankrupt, at length, both in fortune and constitution, he was seized with a fever while paying a visit to Mr. Wilkes, at Boulogne: and terminated his brilliant but guilty career at the early age of thirty-four.

and the Times, were catchpennies. Gotham, unless I am a greater blockhead than he, which I am far from believing, is a noble and beautiful poem, and a poem with which I make no doubt the author took as much pains as with any he ever wrote. Making allowance (and Dryden, perhaps, in his Absalom and Achitophel stands in need of the same indulgence) for an unwarrantable use of scripture, it appears to me to be a masterly performance. Independence is a most animated piece, full of strength and spirit, and marked with that bold masculine character which I think is the great peculiarity of this writer. And the Times (except that the subject is disgusting to the last degree) stands equally high in my opinion. He is indeed a careless writer for the most part, but where shall we find, in any of those authors who finish their works with the exactness of a Flemish pencil, those bold and daring strokes of fancy, those numbers so hazardously ventured upon and so happily finished, the matter so compressed and yet so clear, and the coloring so sparingly laid on and yet with such a beautiful effect? In short, it is not his least praise that he is never guilty of those faults as a writer which he lays to the charge of others: a proof that he did not judge by a borrowed standard, or from rules laid down by critics, but that he was qualified to do it by his own native powers and his great superiority of genius: for he, that wrote so much and so fast, would, through inadvertence and hurry, unavoidably have departed from rules which he might have found in books, but his own truly poetical talent was a guide which could not suffer him to err. A race-horse is graceful in his swiftest pace, and never makes an awkward motion, though he is pushed to his utmost speed. A cart-horse might perhaps be taught to play tricks in the riding-school, and might prance and curvet like his betters, but at some unlucky time would be sure to betray the baseness of his original. It is an affair of very little consequence perhaps to the well-being of mankind, but I cannot help regretting that he died so soon. Those words of Virgil, upon the immature death of Marcellus, might serve for his epitaph.

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent."

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear Friend,—I find the Register in all respects an entertaining medley, but especially in this, that it has brought to my view some long forgotten pieces of my own production. I mean by the way two or three. Those I have marked with my own initials, and you may be sure I found them peculiarly agreeable, as they had not only the grace of being mine, but that of novelty likewise to recommend them. It is at least twenty years since I saw them. You, I think, was never a dabbler in rhyme. I have been one ever since I was fourteen years of age, when I began with translating an elegy of Tibullus. I have no more right to the name of a poet than a maker of mouse-traps has to that of an engineer; but my little exploits in this way have at times amused me so much, that I have often wished myself a good one. Such a talent in verse as mine is like a child's rattle, very entertaining to the trifler that uses it and very disagreeable to all besides. But it has served to rid me of some melancholy moments, for I only take it up as a gentleman-performer does his fiddle. I have this peculiarity belonging to me as a rhymist, that though I am charmed to a great degree with my own work while it is on the anvil, I can seldom bear to look at it when it is once finished. The more I contemplate it the more it loses its value, till I am at last disgusted with it. I then throw it by, take it up again, perhaps ten years after, and am as much delighted with it as at the first.

Few people have the art of being agreeable when they talk of themselves; if you are not weary therefore, you pay me a high compliment.

I dare say Miss S——* was much diverted with the conjecture of her friends. The true key to the pleasure she found at Olney was plain enough to be seen, but they chose to overlook it. She brought with her a disposition to be pleased, which, whoever does, is sure to find a visit agreeable, because they make it so Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, August 31, 1786.

My dear Friend.—I began to fear for your health, and every day said to myself—I must write to Bagot soon, if it be only to ask him how he does—a measure that I should certainly have pursued long since, had I been less absorbed in Homer than I am. But such are my engagements in that quarter, that they make me, I think, good for little else.

Many thanks, my friend, for the names that you have sent me. The Bagots will make a most conspicuous figure among my subscribers, and I shall not, I hope, soon forget my obligations to them.

The unacquaintedness of modern ears with the divine harmony of Milton's numbers,†

* Miss Shuttleworth.

† Addison was the first, by his excellent critiques in the Spectator, to excite public attention to a more just sense

and the principles upon which he constructed them, is the cause of the quarrel that they have with elisions in blank verse. But where is the remedy? In vain should you or I, and a few hundreds more perhaps who have studied his versification, tell them of the superior majesty of it, and that for that majesty it is greatly indebted to those elisions. In their ears they are discord and dissonance, they lengthen the line beyond its due limits, and are therefore not to be endured. There is a whimsical inconsistence in the judgment of modern readers in this particular. Ask them all round, Whom do you account the best writer of blank verse? and they will reply, almost to a man, Milton, to be sure: Milton against the field! Yet if a writer of the present day should construct his numbers exactly upon Milton's plan, not one in fifty of these professed admirers of Milton would endure him. The case standing thus, what is to be done? An author must either be contented to give disgust to the generality, or he must humor them by sinning against his own judgment. This latter course, so far as elisions are concerned, I have adopted as essential to my success. In every other respect, I give as much variety in my measure as I can, I believe I may say as in ten syllables it is possible to give, shifting perpetually the pause and cadence, and accounting myself happy that modern refinement has not yet enacted laws against this also. If it had, I protest to you I would have dropped my design of translating Homer entirely; and with what an indignant stateliness of reluctance I make them the concession that I have mentioned, Mrs. Unwin can witness, who hears all my complaints upon the subject.

After having lived twenty years at Olney, we are on the point of leaving it, but shall not migrate far. We have taken a house in the village of Weston. Lady Hesketh is our good angel, by whose aid we are enabled to pass into a better air and a more walkable country. The imprisonment that we have suffered here for so many winters, has hurt us both. That we may suffer it no longer, she stoops to Olney, lifts us from our swamp, and sets us down on the elevated grounds of Weston Underwood. There, my dear friend, I shall be happy to see you, and to thank you in person for all your kindness.

I do not wonder at the judgment that you form of—a foreigner; but you may assure yourself that, foreigner as he is, he has an exquisite taste in English verse. The man is all fire, and an enthusiast in the highest degree on the subject of Homer, and has given me more than once a jog, when I have been inclined to nap with my author. No cold water is to be feared from him that might abate my own fire, rather perhaps too much combustible.

Adieu! mon ami,
Yours faithfully, W. C.

We reserve our remarks on the next letter till its close.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Olney, Sept. 30, 1786.

My dear Friend,—No length of separation will ever make us indifferent either to your pleasures or your pains. We rejoice that you have had so agreeable a jaunt and (excepting Mrs. Newton's terrible fall, from which, however, we are happy to find that she received so little injury) a safe return. We, who live encompassed by rural scenery, can afford to be stationary; though we ourselves, were I not too closely engaged with Homer, should perhaps follow your example, and seek a little refreshment from

* Private correspondence.

of the immortal poem of the Paradise Lost. But it was reserved for Johnson (Rambler, Nos. 86, 88, 90, 94,) to point out the beauty of Milton's versification. He showed that it was formed, as far as our language admits, upon the best models of Greece and Rome, united to the softness of the Italian, the most mellifluous of all modern poetry. To these examples we may add the name of Spenser, who is distinguished for a most melodious flow of versification. Johnson emphatically remarks, that Milton's "skill in harmony was not less than his invention or his learning." Dr. J. Wharton also observes, that his verses vary, and resound as much, and display as much majesty and energy, as any that can be found in Bryden.

We subjoin the following passages as illustrating the melody of his numbers, the grace and dignity of his style, the correspondence of sound with the sentiment, the easy flow of his verses into one another, and the beauty of his cadences.

THE DESCENT OF THE ANGEL RAPHAEL INTO PARADISE.

A seraph wing'd: six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine; the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold,
And odors dipt in Heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide. *Book* V.

How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty vaulted night;
At every fall, smoothing the raven down
Of darkness, till it smiled.

THE BIRTH OF DEATH.

I fled, and cried out *Death*:
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death*!

EVE EATING THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate.
Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seat
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. *Book* IX.

ADAM PARTICIPATING IN THE GREAT TRANSGRESSION.

He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge—
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lour'd; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin—
Original. *Book* IX.

variety and change of place—a course that we might find not only agreeable, but, after a sameness of thirteen years, perhaps useful. You must, undoubtedly, have found your excursion beneficial, who at all other times endure, if not so close a confinement as we, yet a more unhealthy one, in city air and in the centre of continual engagements.

Your letter to Mrs. Unwin, concerning our conduct, and the offence taken at it in our neighborhood, gave us both a great deal of concern; and she is still deeply affected by it. Of this you may assure yourself, that, if our friends in London have been grieved, they have been misinformed; which is the more probable, because the bearers of intelligence hence to London are not always very scrupulous concerning the truth of their reports; and that, if any of our serious neighbors have been astonished, they have been so without the smallest real occasion. Poor people are never well employed even when they judge one another; but when they undertake to scan the motives and estimate the behavior of those whom Providence has exalted a little above them, they are utterly out of their province and their depth. They often see us get into Lady Hesketh's carriage, and rather uncharitably suppose that it always carries us into a scene of dissipation, which, in fact, it never does. We visit, indeed, at Mr. Throckmorton's, and at Gayhurst; rarely, however, at Gayhurst, on account of the greater distance; more frequently, though not very frequently, at Weston, both because it is nearer, and because our business in the house that is making ready for us often calls us that way. The rest of our journeys are to Bozeat turnpike and back again, or perhaps to the cabinet-maker's at Newport. As Othello says,

> The very head and front of my offending
> Hath this extent, no more.

What good we can get or can do in these visits, is another question; which they, I am sure, are not at all qualified to solve. Of this we are both sure, that under the guidance of Providence we have formed these connexions; that we should have hurt the Christian cause, rather than have served it, by a prudish abstinence from them; and that St. Paul himself, conducted to them as we have been, would have found it expedient to have done as we have done. It is always impossible to conjecture, to much purpose, from the beginnings of a providence in what it will terminate. If we have neither received nor communicated any spiritual good at present, while conversant with our new acquaintance, at least no harm has befallen on either side; and it were too hazardous an assertion even for our censorious neighbors to make, that, because the cause of the Gospel does not appear to have been served at present, therefore it never can be in any future intercourse that we may have with them. In the meantime, I speak a strict truth, and as in the sight of God, when I say that we are neither of us at all more addicted to gadding than heretofore. We both naturally love seclusion from company, and never go into it without putting a force upon our disposition; at the same time I will confess, and you will easily conceive that the melancholy incident to such close confinement as we have so long endured finds itself a little relieved by such amusements as a society so innocent affords. You may look round the Christian world, and find few, I believe, of our station, who have so little intercourse as we with the world that is not Christian.

We place all the uneasiness that you have felt for us upon this subject to the account of that cordial friendship of which you have long given us proof. But you may be assured, that, notwithstanding all rumors to the contrary, we are exactly what we were when you saw us last:—I, miserable on account of God's departure from me, which I believe to be final; and she seeking his return to me in the path of duty and by continual prayer.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

That the above letter may be fully understood, it is necessary to state that Mr. Newton had received an intimation from Olney that the habits of Cowper, since the arrival of Lady Hesketh, had experienced a change: and that an admonitory letter from himself might not be without its use. Under these circumstances, Newton addressed such a letter to his friend as the occasion seemed to require. The answer of Cowper is already before the reader, and in our opinion amounts to a full justification of the poet's conduct. We know, from various testimonies of unquestionable authority, that no change tending to impeach the consistency of Mrs. Unwin or of Cowper can justly be alleged. If Newton should be considered as giving too easy a credence to these reports, or too rigid and ascetic in his spirit, we conceive that he could not, consistently with his own views as a faithful minister, and his deep interest in the welfare of Cowper, have acted otherwise, though he may possibly have expressed himself too strongly. As to Newton's own spirit and temper, no man was more amiable and sociable in his feelings, nor the object of more affectionate esteem and regard in the circles where he was known. His character has been already described by Cowper, as that of a man that lived in an atmosphere of Christian peace and love. "It is therefore," observes the poet, "you were beloved at Olney, and if you preached to the Chicksaws

and Chactaws, would be equally beloved by them."*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Oct. 6, 1786.

You have not heard, I suppose, that the ninth book of my translation is at the bottom of the Thames. But it is even so. A storm overtook it in its way to Kingston, and it sunk, together with the whole cargo of the boat in which it was a passenger. Not figuratively foreshowing, I hope, by its submersion, the fate of all the rest. My kind and generous cousin, who leaves nothing undone that she thinks can conduce to my comfort, encouragement, or convenience, is my transcriber also. *She* wrote the copy, and *she* will have to write it again—*hers*, therefore, is the damage. I have a thousand reasons to lament that the time approaches when we must lose her. She has made a winterly summer a most delightful one, but the winter itself we must spend without her.

W. C.

We are at length arrived at the period when Cowper removed to Weston. He fixed his residence there Nov. 15th, 1786. The first letters addressed from that place are to his friends Mr. Bagot and Mr. Newton.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston Underwood, Nov. 17, 1786.

My dear Friend,—There are some things that do not actually shorten the life of man, yet seem to do so, and frequent removals from place to place are of that number. For my own part, at least, I am apt to think if I had been more stationary, I should seem to myself to have lived longer. My many changes of habitation have divided my time into many short periods, and when I look back upon them they appear only as the stages in a day's journey, the first of which is at no very great distance from the last.

I lived longer at Olney than anywhere. There indeed I lived till mouldering walls and a tottering house warned me to depart. I have accordingly taken the hint, and two days since arrived, or rather took up my abode, at Weston. You perhaps have never made the experiment, but I can assure you that the confusion which attends a transmigration of this kind is infinite, and has a terrible effect in deranging the intellects. I have been obliged to renounce my Homer on the occasion, and, though not for many days, I yet feel as if study and meditation, so long my confirmed habits, were on a sudden become impracticable, and that I shall certainly find them so when I attempt them again. But, in a scene so much quieter and pleasanter than that which I have just escaped from, in a house so much more commodious, and with furniture about me so much more to my taste, I shall hope to recover my literary tendency again, when once the bustle of the occasion shall have subsided.

How glad I should be to receive you under a roof where you would find me so much more comfortably accommodated than at Olney! I know your warmth of heart toward me, and am sure that you would rejoice in my joy. At present indeed I have not had time for much self-gratulation, but have every reason to hope nevertheless that in due time I shall derive considerable advantage, both in health and spirits, from the alteration made in my *whereabout*.

I have now the twelfth book of the Iliad in hand, having settled the eleven first books finally, as I think, or nearly so. The winter is the time when I make the greatest riddance.

Adieu, my friend Walter! Let me hear from you, and

Believe me, ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston Underwood, Nov. 17, 1786.

My dear Friend,—My usual time of answering your letters having been unavoidably engrossed by occasions that would not be thrust aside, I have been obliged to postpone the payment of my debt for a whole week. Even now it is not without some difficulty that I discharge it: which you will easily believe, when I tell you that this is only the second day that has seen us inhabitants of our new abode. When God speaks to a chaos, it becomes a scene of order and harmony in a moment; but when his creatures have thrown one house into confusion by leaving it, and another by tumbling themselves and their goods into it, not less than many days' labor and contrivance is necessary to give them their proper places. And it belongs to furniture of all kinds, however convenient it may be in its place, to be a nuisance out of it. We find ourselves here in a comfortable dwelling. Such it is in itself; and my cousin, who has spared no expense in dressing it up for us, has made it a genteel one. Such, at least, it will be when its contents are a little harmonized. She left us on Tuesday, and on Wednesday in the evening Mrs. Unwin and I took possession. I could not help giving a last look to my old prison and its precincts; and, though I cannot easily account for it, having been miserable there so many years, felt something like a heart-ache when I took my last leave of a

* See page 135.

* Private correspondence.

scene that certainly in itself had nothing to engage affection. But I recollected that I had once been happy there, and could not, without tears in my eyes, bid adieu to a place in which God had so often found me. The human mind is a great mystery; mine, at least, appeared to me to be such upon this occasion. I found that I had not only had a tenderness for that ruinous abode, because it had once known me happy in the presence of God; but that even the distress I had suffered for so long a time, on account of his absence, had endeared it to me as much. I was weary of every object, had long wished for a change, yet could not take leave without a pang at parting. What consequences are to attend our removal, God only knows. I know well that it is not in situation to effect a cure of melancholy like mine. The change, however, has been entirely a providential one; for, much as I wished it, I never uttered that wish, except to Mrs. Unwin. When I learned that the house was to be let, and had seen it, I had a strong desire that Lady Hesketh should take it for herself, if she should happen to like the country. That desire, indeed, is not exactly fulfilled; and yet, upon the whole, is exceeded. We are the tenants; but she assures us that we shall often have her for a guest; and here is room enough for us all. You, I hope, my dear friend, and Mrs. Newton, will want no assurances to convince you that you will always be received here with the sincerest welcome. More welcome than you have been you cannot be; but better accommodated you may and will be.

Adieu, my dear friend. Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances and mine conclude me ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston Lodge, Nov. 26, 1786.

It is my birth-day, my beloved cousin, and I determine to employ a part of it, that it may not be destitute of festivity, in writing to you. The dark, thick fog that has obscured it would have been a burden to me at Olney, but here I have hardly attended to it. The neatness and snugness of our abode compensates all the dreariness of the season, and, whether the ways are wet or dry, our house at least is always warm and commodious. Oh! for you, my cousin, to partake these comforts with us! I will not begin already to tease you upon that subject, but Mrs. Unwin remembers to have heard from your own lips that you hate London in the spring. Perhaps, therefore, by that time, you may be glad to escape from a scene which will be every day growing more disagreeable, that you may enjoy the comforts of the Lodge. You well know that the best house has a desolate appearance unfurnished. This house accordingly, since it has been occupied by us and our *meubles*, is as much superior to what it was when you saw it as you can imagine. The parlor is even elegant. When I say that the parlor is elegant, I do not mean to insinuate that the study is not so. It is neat, warm, and silent, and a much better study than I deserve, if I do not produce in it an incomparable translation of Homer. I think every day of those lines of Milton, and congratulate myself on having obtained, before I am quite superannuated, what he seems not to have hoped for sooner:

> "And may at length my weary age
> Find out the peaceful hermitage!"

For if it is not a hermitage, at least it is a much better thing, and you must always understand, my dear, that when poets talk of cottages, hermitages, and such like things, they mean a house with six sashes in front, two comfortable parlors, a smart staircase, and three bed-chambers, of convenient dimensions; in short, exactly such a house as this.

The Throckmortons continue the most obliging neighbors in the world. One morning last week, they both went with me to the cliffs—a scene, my dear, in which you would delight beyond measure, but which you cannot visit, except in the spring or autumn. The heat of summer, and clinging dirt of winter, would destroy you. What is called the cliff, is no cliff, nor at all like one, but a beautiful terrace, gently sloping down to the Ouse, and from the brow of which, though not lofty, you have a view of such a valley as makes that which you see from the hills near Olney, and which I have had the honor to celebrate, an affair of no consideration.*

Wintry as the weather is, do not suspect that it confines me. I ramble daily, and every day change my ramble. Wherever I go, I find short grass under my feet, and, when I have travelled perhaps five miles, come home with shoes not at all too dirty for a drawing-room. I was pacing yesterday under the elms that surround the field in which stands the great alcove, when lifting my eyes I saw two black genteel figures bolt through a hedge into the path where I was walking. You guess already who they were, and that they could be nobody but our neighbors. They had seen me from a hill at a distance,

* "How oft, upon yon eminence, our pace
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene:
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned
The distant plough slow moving, and, beside
His laboring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain, diminished to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course,
Delighted," &c. &c. *The Task*, Book I

and had traversed a great turnip field to get at me. You see, therefore, my dear, that I am in some request. Alas! in too much request with some people. The verses of Cadwallader have found me at last.

I am charmed with your account of our little cousin* at Kensington. If the world does not spoil him hereafter, he will be a valuable man.

Good night, and may God bless thee!

W. C.

In the midst of the brightening prospects that seemed to await Cowper, by a change of residence so conducive to his health and spirits, his tender and affectionate feelings received a severe shock by the unexpected intelligence of the death of Mr. Unwin. Few events could have made a more sensible inroad on his happiness, and on that of Mrs. Unwin. This zealous and truly excellent man had been taking a tour with Mr. Henry Thornton, when, on his return, he was seized with an attack at Winchester, which in a few days terminated his valuable life. How precarious are our enjoyments! By what a slender tenure do we hold every sublunary blessing, and how mysterious are the dispensations of Providence! The Rev. William Unwin, the endeared friend and correspondent of Cowper; the possessor of virtues that give a charm to domestic life, while divine grace hallowed their character and tendency; the devoted minister of Christ, turning many to righteousness, by the purity of his doctrine and the eminence of his example, was cut off in the midst of his career, when his continuance was most needed by his family, and the influence of his principles had begun to be felt beyond the precincts of his parish. Happily for himself and his surviving friends, he died as he lived, supported by the hopes and consolations of the gospel, and with the assured prospect of a blessed immortality.

"And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."†

Cowper thus imparts the painful tidings to Lady Hesketh.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1786.

I sent you, my dear, a melancholy letter, and I do not know that I shall now send you one very unlike it. Not that anything occurs in consequence of our late loss more afflictive than was to be expected, but the mind does not perfectly recover its tone after a shock like that which has been felt so lately. This I observe, that, though my experience has long since taught me that this world is a world of shadows, and that it is the more prudent as well as the more Christian course to possess the comforts that we find in it as if we possessed them not, it is no easy matter to reduce this doctrine into practice. We forget that that God who gave them may, when he pleases, take them away; and that perhaps it may please him to take them at a time when we least expect, or are least disposed to part from them. Thus it has happened in the present case. There never was a moment in Unwin's life when there seemed to be more urgent want of him than the moment in which he died. He had attained to an age, when, if they are at any time useful, men become more useful to their families, their friends, and the world. His parish began to feel and to be sensible of the advantages of his ministry. The clergy around him were many of them awed by his example. His children were thriving under his own tuition and management, and his eldest boy is likely to feel his loss severely, being by his years, in some respect qualified, to understand the value of such a parent; by his literary proficiency too clever for a school-boy, and too young at the same time for the university. The removal of a man in the prime of life, of such a character, and with such connexions, seems to make a void in society that can never be filled. God seemed to have made him just what he was, that he might be a blessing to others, and, when the influence of his character and abilities began to be felt, removed him. These are mysteries, my dear, that we cannot contemplate without astonishment, but which will nevertheless be explained hereafter, and must in the meantime be revered in silence. It is well for his mother that she has spent her life in the practice of an habitual acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence, else I know that this stroke would have been heavier, after all that she has suffered upon another account, than she could have borne. She derives, as she well may, great consolation from the thought that he lived the life and died the death of a Christian. The consequence is, if possible, more unavoidable than the most mathematical conclusion that, therefore, he is happy. So farewell, my friend Unwin! the first man for whom I conceived a friendship after my removal from St. Alban's, and for whom I cannot but still continue to feel a friendship, though I shall see thee with these eyes no more!

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Dec. 9, 1786.

I am perfectly sure that you are mistaken,

* Lord Cowper. † Rev. xxi. 7; xxii. 12.

though I do not wonder at it, considering the singular nature of the event, in the judgment that you form of poor Unwin's death, as it affects the interest of his intended pupil. When a tutor was wanted for him, you sought out the wisest and best man for the office within the circle of your connexions. It pleased God to take him home to himself. Men eminently wise and good are very apt to die, because they are fit to do so. You found in Unwin a man worthy to succeed him, and he in whose hands are the issues of life and death, seeing no doubt that Unwin was ripe for a removal into a better state, removed him also. The matter viewed in this light seems not so wonderful as to refuse all explanation, except such as in a melancholy moment you have given to it. And I am so convinced that the little boy's destiny had no influence at all in hastening the death of his tutors elect, that, were it not impossible on more accounts than one that I should be able to serve him in that capacity, I would without the least fear of dying a moment sooner, offer myself to that office; I would even do it, were I conscious of the same fitness for another and a better state that I believe them to have been both endowed with. In that case, I perhaps might die too, but, if I should, it would not be on account of that connexion. Neither, my dear, had your interference in the business anything to do with the catastrophe. Your whole conduct in it must have been acceptable in the sight of God, as it was directed by principles of the purest benevolence.*

I have not touched Homer to-day. Yesterday was one of my terrible seasons, and when I arose this morning I found that I had not sufficiently recovered myself to engage in such an occupation. Having letters to write, I the more willingly gave myself a dispensation. Good night.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 9, 1786.

My dear Friend,—We had just begun to enjoy the pleasantness of our new situation, to find at least as much comfort in it as the season of the year would permit, when affliction found us out in our retreat, and the news reached us of the death of Mr. Unwin. He had taken a western tour with Mr. Henry Thornton, and in his return, at Winchester, was seized with a putrid fever which sent him to his grave. He is gone to it, however, though young, as fit for it as age itself could have made him. Regretted, indeed, and always to be regretted, by those who knew him, for he had everything that makes a man valuable both in his principles and in his manners, but leaving still this consolation to his surviving friends, that he was desirable in this world chiefly because he was so well prepared for a better.

I find myself here situated exactly to my mind. Weston is one of the prettiest villages in England, and the walks about it at all seasons of the year delightful. I know that you will rejoice with me in the change that we have made, and for which I am altogether indebted to Lady Hesketh. It is a change as great, as (to compare metropolitan things with rural) from St. Giles's to Grosvenor Square. Our house is in all respects commodious, and in some degree elegant; and I cannot give you a better idea of that which we have left than by telling you the present candidates for it are a publican and a shoemaker. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, Dec. 16, 1786.

My dear Friend,—The death of one whom I valued as I did Mr. Unwin is a subject on which could say much, and with much feeling. But habituated as my mind has been these many years to melancholy themes, I am glad to excuse myself the contemplation of them as much as possible. I will only observe, that the death of so young a man, whom I so lately saw in good health, and whose life was so desirable on every account, has something in it peculiarly distressing. I cannot think of the widow and the children that he has left, without a heart-ache that I remember not to have felt before. We may well say, that the ways of God are mysterious: in truth they are so, and to a degree that only such events can give us any conception of. Mrs. Unwin begs me to give her love to you, with thanks for your kind letter. Hers has been so much a life of affliction, that whatever occurs to her in that shape has not, at least, the terrors of novelty to embitter it. She is supported under this, as she has been under a thousand others, with a submission of which I never saw her deprived for a moment.

Once, since we left Olney, I had occasion to call at our old dwelling; and never did I see so forlorn and woeful a spectacle. Deserted of its inhabitants, it seemed as if it could never be dwelt in forever. The coldness of it, the dreariness, and the dirt, made me think it no unapt resemblance of a soul that God has forsaken. While he dwelt in it, and manifested himself there, he could create his own accommodations, and give it

* Lady Hesketh had placed a young friend of hers under a tutor, who died. She then consigned him to the care of Mr. Unwin, who also departed. Her mind was much afflicted by the singularity of this event, and the above letter is Cowper's reasoning upon it.

* Private correspondence.

occasionally the appearance of a palace; but the moment he withdraws and takes with him all the furniture and embellishment of his graces, it becomes what it was before he entered it—the habitation of vermin and the image of desolation. Sometimes I envy the living, but not much or not long; for, while they live, as we call it, they too are liable to desertion. But the dead who have died in the Lord I envy always; for they, I take it for granted, can be no more forsaken.

This Babylon, however, that we have left behind us, ruinous as it is, the ceilings cracked and the walls crumbling, still finds some who covet it. A shoemaker and an alemonger have proposed themselves as joint candidates to succeed us. Some small difference between them and the landlord, on the subject of rent, has hitherto kept them out; but at last they will probably agree. In the meantime Mr. R—— prophesies its fall, and tells them that they will occupy it at the hazard of their lives unless it be well propped before they enter it. We have not, therefore, left it much too soon; and this we knew before we migrated, though the same prophet would never speak out so long as only our heads were in danger.

I wish you well through your laborious task of transcribing. I hope the good lady's meditations are such as amuse you rather more, while you copy them, than meditations in general would; which, for the most part, have appeared to me the most labored, insipid, and unnatural of all productions.

Adieu, my dear friend. Our love attends you both.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Dec. 21, 1786.

Your welcome letter, my beloved cousin, which ought by the date to have arrived on Sunday, being by some untoward accident delayed, came not till yesterday. It came, however, and has relieved me from a thousand distressing apprehensions on your account.

The dew of your intelligence has refreshed my poetical laurels. A little praise now and then is very good for your hard-working poet, who is apt to grow languid, and perhaps careless, without it. Praise I find affects us as money does. The more a man gets of it, with the more vigilance he watches over and preserves it. Such at least is its effect on me, and you may assure yourself that I will never lose a mite of it for want of care.

I have already invited the good Padre* in general terms, and he shall positively dine here next week, whether he will or not. I do not at all suspect that his kindness to Protestants has anything insidious in it, any more than I suspect that he transcribes Homer for me with a view for my conversion. He would find me a tough piece of business, I can tell him, for, when I had no religion at all, I had yet a terrible dread of the Pope. How much more now!

I should have sent you a longer letter, but was obliged to devote my last evening to the melancholy employment of composing a Latin inscription for the tombstone of poor William, two copies of which I wrote out and enclosed, one to Henry Thornton, and one to Mr. Newton. W. C.

* The chaplain of John Throckmorton, Esq.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 3, 1787.

My dear Friend,—You wish to hear from me at any calm interval of epic frenzy. An interval presents itself, but whether calm or not is perhaps doubtful. Is it possible for a man to be calm who for three weeks past has been perpetually occupied in slaughter; letting out one man's bowels, smiting another through the gullet, transfixing the liver of another, and lodging an arrow in a fourth? Read the thirteenth book of the Iliad, and you will find such amusing incidents as these the subject of it, the sole subject. In order to interest myself in it and to catch the spirit of it, I had need discard all humanity. It is woeful work; and were the best poet in the world to give us at this day such a list of killed and wounded, he would not escape universal censure, to the praise of a more enlightened age be it spoken. I have waded through much blood, and through much more I must wade before I shall have finished. I determine in the mean time to account it all very sublime, and for two reasons;—first, because all the learned think so, and secondly, because I am to translate it. But were I an indifferent by-stander, perhaps I should venture to wish that Homer had applied his wonderful powers to a less disgusting subject: he has in the Odyssey, and I long to get at it.

I have not the good fortune to meet with any of these fine things that you say are printed in my praise. But I learn from certain advertisements in the Morning Herald, that I make a conspicuous figure in the entertainments of Freemasons' Hall. I learn also that my volumes are out of print, and that a third edition is soon to be published. But, if I am not gratified with the sight of odes composed to my honor and glory, I have at least been tickled with some *douceurs* of a very flattering nature by the post. A lady unknown addresses the best of men—an unknown gentleman has read my inimitable poems, and invites me to his seat in Hampshire—another incognito gives me hopes of a

memorial in his garden, and a Welsh attorney sends me his verses to revise, and obligingly asks

"Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?"

If you find me a little vain hereafter, my friend, you must excuse it in consideration of these powerful incentives, especially the latter; for surely the poet who can charm an attorney, especially a Welsh one, must be at least an Orpheus, if not something greater.

Mrs. Unwin is as much delighted as myself with our present situation. But it is a sort of April weather life that we lead in this world. A little sunshine is generally the prelude to a storm. Hardly had we begun to enjoy the change, when the death of her son cast a gloom upon everything. He was a most exemplary man; of your order; learned, polite, and aimable; the father of lovely children, and the husband of a wife (very much like dear Mrs. Bagot) who adored him.

Adieu, my friend!

Your affectionate, W. C.

The correspondence of Cowper was very limited this year, owing to a severe attack of nervous fever, which continued during a period of eight months, and greatly affected his health and spirits.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 8, 1787.

I have had a little nervous fever lately, my dear, that has somewhat abridged my sleep; and though I find myself better to-day than I have been since it seized me, yet I feel my head lightish, and not in the best order for writing. You will find me therefore perhaps not only less alert in my manner than I usually am when my spirits are good, but rather shorter. I will however proceed to scribble till I find that it fatigues me, and then will do as I know you would bid me do were you here, shut up my desk and take a walk.

The good General tells me that in the eight first books which I have sent him he still finds alterations and amendments necessary, of which I myself am equally persuaded; and he asks my leave to lay them before an intimate friend of his, of whom he gives a character that bespeaks him highly deserving such a trust. To this I have no objection, desiring only to make the translation as perfect as I can make it. If God grant me life and health, I would spare no labor to secure that point. The General's letter is extremely kind, and both for matter and manner like all the rest of his dealings with his cousin, the poet.

I had a letter also yesterday from Mr. Smith, member for Nottingham. Though we never saw each other, he writes to me in the most friendly terms, and interests himself much in my Homer, and in the success of my subscription. Speaking on this latter subject, he says, that my poems are read by hundreds who know nothing of my proposals, and makes no doubt that they would subscribe if they did. I have myself always thought them imperfectly or rather insufficiently announced.

I could pity the poor woman who has been weak enough to claim my song; such pilferings are sure to be detected. I wrote it, I know not how long, but I suppose four years ago. The "Rose" in question was a rose given to Lady Austen by Mrs. Unwin, and the incident that suggested the subject occurred in the room in which you slept at the vicarage, which Lady Austen made her dining-room. Some time since, Mr. Bull going to London, I gave him a copy of it, which he undertook to convey to Nichols, the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine. He showed it to a Mrs. C——, who begged to copy it, and promised to send it to the printer's by her servant. Three or four months afterwards, and when I had concluded it was lost, I saw it in the Gentleman's Magazine, with my signature, "W. C." Poor simpleton! She will find now perhaps that the rose had a thorn, and that she has pricked her fingers with it. Adieu! my beloved cousin. W. C.

Though these verses, of which another claimed the authorship, will appear in the collection of poems, yet as they are so characterized by taste and beauty, and the incident which gave rise to them is mentioned in the above letter, we think the reader will be pleased with their insertion.

The rose had been wash'd, just washed in a shower,
Which Mary* to Anna† convey'd;
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seemed to a fanciful view
To weep for the buds it had left with regret
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was,
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd;
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind;
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile,
And the tear that is wip'd with a little address
May be followed perhaps by a smile.

* Mrs. Unwin. † Lady Austen.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, Jan. 13, 1787.

My dear Friend,—It gave me pleasure, such as it was, to learn by a letter from Mr. H. Thornton, that the inscription for the tomb of poor Unwin has been approved of. The dead have nothing to do with human praises, but if they died in the Lord, they have abundant praises to render to Him, which is far better. The dead, whatever they leave behind them, have nothing to regret. Good Christians are the only creatures in the world that are truly good, and them they will see again, and see them improved; therefore them they regret not. Regret is for the living: what we get, we soon lose, and what we lose, we regret. The most obvious consolation in this case seems to be, that we who regret others shall quickly become objects of regret ourselves; for mankind are continually passing off in rapid succession.

I have many kind friends, who, like yourself, wish that, instead of turning my endeavors to a translation of Homer, I had proceeded in the way of original poetry. But I can truly say that it was ordered otherwise, not by me, but by the Providence that governs all my thoughts and directs my intentions as he pleases. It may seem strange, but it is true, that after having written a volume, in general with great ease to myself, I found it impossible to write another page. The mind of man is not a fountain, but a cistern; and mine, God knows, a broken one. *It is my creed, that the intellect depends as much, both for the energy and the multitude of its exertions, upon the operations of God's agency upon it, as the heart, for the exercise of its graces, upon the influence of the Holy Spirit.* According to this persuasion, I may very reasonably affirm, that it was not God's pleasure that I should proceed in the same track, because he did not enable me to do it. A whole year I waited, and waited in circumstances of mind that made a state of non-employment peculiarly irksome to me. I longed for the pen, as the only remedy, but I could find no subject: extreme distress of spirit at last drove me, as, if I mistake not, I told you some time since, to lay Homer before me and translate for amusement. Why it pleased God that I should be hunted into such a business, of such enormous length and labor, by miseries for which He did not see good to afford me any other remedy, I know not. But so it was: and jejune as the consolation may be, and unsuited to the exigencies of a mind that once was spiritual, yet a thousand times have I been glad of it; for a thousand times it has served at least to divert my attention, in some degree, from such terrible tempests as I believe have seldom been permitted to beat upon a human mind. Let my friends, therefore, who wish me some little measure of tranquillity in the performance of the most turbulent voyage that ever Christian mariner made, be contented, that, having Homer's mountains and forests to windward, I escape, under their shelter, from the force of many a gust that would almost overset me; especially when they consider that, not by choice, but by necessity, I make *them* my refuge. As to fame, and honor, and glory, that may be acquired by poetical feats of any sort: God knows, that if I could lay me down in my grave with hope at my side, or sit with hope at my side in a dungeon all the residue of my days, I would cheerfully waive them all. For the little fame that I have already earned has never saved me from one distressing night, or from one despairing day, since I first acquired it. *For* what I am reserved, or *to* what, is a mystery; I would fain hope, not merely that I may amuse others, or only to be a translator of Homer.

Sally Perry's case has given us much concern. I have no doubt that it is distemper. But distresses of mind, that are occasioned by distemper, are the most difficult of all to deal with. They refuse all consolation; they will hear no reason. God only, by his own immediate impressions, can remove them; as, after an experience of thirteen years' misery, I can abundantly testify.

Yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 18, 1787.

I have been so much indisposed with the fever that I told you had seized me, my nights during the whole week may be said to have been almost sleepless. The consequence has been, that, except the translation of about thirty lines at the conclusion of the thirteenth book, I have been forced to abandon Homer entirely. This was a sensible mortification to me, as you may suppose, and felt the more, because, my spirits of course failing with my strength, I seemed to have peculiar need of my old amusement. It seemed hard therefore to be forced to resign it just when I wanted it most. But Homer's battles cannot be fought by a man who does not sleep well, and who has not some little degree of animation in the daytime. Last night, however, quite contrary to my expectations, the fever left me entirely, and I slept quietly, soundly, and long. If it please God that it return not, I shall soon find myself in a condition to proceed. I walk constantly, that is to say, Mrs. Unwin and I together; for at these times I keep her continually employed, and never suffer her to be absent from me many minutes. She gives me all her time

and all her attention, and forgets that there is another object in the world.

Mrs. Carter thinks on the subject of dreams as everybody else does, that is to say, according to her own experience. She has had no extraordinary ones, and therefore accounts them only the ordinary operations of the fancy. Mine are of a texture that will not suffer me to ascribe them to so inadequate a cause, or to any cause but the operation of an exterior agency. I have a mind, my dear, (and to you I will venture to boast of it) as free from superstition as any man living, neither do I give heed to dreams in general as predictive, though particular dreams I believe to be so. Some very sensible persons, and, I suppose, Mrs. Carter among them, will acknowledge that in old times God spoke by dreams, but affirm with much boldness that he has since ceased to do so. If you ask them why, they answer, because he has now revealed his will in the Scripture, and there is no longer any need that he should instruct or admonish us by dreams. I grant that with respect to doctrines and precepts he has left us in want of nothing, but has he thereby precluded himself in any of the operations of his Providence? Surely not. It is perfectly a different consideration; and the same need that there ever was of his interference in this way there is still, and ever must be, while man continues blind and fallible, and a creature beset with dangers, which he can neither foresee nor obviate. His operations however of this kind are, I allow, very rare; and, as to the generality of dreams, they are made of such stuff, and are in themselves so insignificant, that, though I believe them all to be the manufacture of others, not our own, I account it not a farthing-matter who manufactures them. So much for dreams!

My fever is not yet gone, but sometimes seems to leave me. It is altogether of the nervous kind, and attended now and then with much dejection.

A young gentleman called here yesterday who came six miles out of his way to see me. He was on a journey to London from Glasgow, having just left the University there. He came, I suppose, partly to satisfy his own curiosity, but chiefly, as it seemed, to bring me the thanks of some of the Scotch professors for my two volumes. His name is Rose, an Englishman. Your spirits being good, you will derive more pleasure from this incident than I can at present, therefore I send it.*

Adieu, very affectionately, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, July 24, 1787.

Dear Sir,—This is the first time I have written these six months, and nothing but the constraint of obligation could induce me to write now. I cannot be so wanting to myself as not to endeavor, at least, to thank you both for the visits with which you have favored me, and the poems that you sent me; in my present state of mind I taste nothing, nevertheless I read, partly from habit, and partly because it is the only thing I am capable of.

I have therefore read Burns's poems, and have read them twice; and, though they be written in a language that is new to me, and many of them on subjects much inferior to the author's ability, I think them on the whole a very extraordinary production. He is, I believe, the only poet these kingdoms have produced in the lower rank of life since Shakspeare (I should rather say since Prior) who need not be indebted for any part of his praise to a charitable consideration of his origin and the disadvantages under which he has labored. It will be a pity if he should not hereafter divest himself of barbarism, and content himself with writing pure English, in which he appears perfectly qualified to excel. He who can command admiration dishonors himself if he aims no higher than to raise a laugh.

I am, dear sir, with my best wishes for your prosperity, and with Mrs. Unwin's respects,

Your obliged and affectionate humble servant, W. C.

Burns is one of those instances which the annals of literature occasionally furnish of genius surmounting every obstacle by its own natural powers, and rising to commanding eminence. He was a Scottish peasant, born in Ayrshire, a native of that land where Fingal lived and Ossian sung.* He rose from the plough, to take his part in the polished and intellectual society of Edinburgh, where he was admitted to the intercourse of Robertson, Blair, Lord Monboddo, Stewart, Alison, and Mackenzie, and found a patron in the Earl of Glencairn.

* Mr. Rose was the son of Dr. Rose, of Chiswick, who formerly kept a seminary there. He was at this time a young man, distinguished by talent and great amiableness of character, and won the regard and esteem of Cowper. He soon became one of his favorite correspondents.

* The peasantry of Scotland do not resemble the same class of men in England, owing to a legal provision made by the Parliament of Scotland, in 1646, whereby a school is established in every parish, for the express purpose of educating the poor. This statute was repealed on the accession of Charles the Second, in 1660, but was finally re-established by the Scottish Parliament, after the Revolution, in 1696. The consequence of this enactment is, that every one, even in the humblest condition of life, is able to read; and most persons are more or less skilled in writing and arithmetic. The moral effects are such, that it has been said, one quarter sessions for the town of Manchester has sent more felons for transportation than all the judges of Scotland consign during a whole year. Why is not a similar enactment made for Ireland, where there is more ignorance and consequently more demoralization, than in any country of equal extent in Europe?

His poetry is distinguished by the powers of a vivid imagination, a deep acquaintance with the recesses of the human heart, and an ardent and generous sensibility of feeling. It contains beautiful delineations of the scenery and manners of his country. "Many of her rivers and mountains," observes his biographer,* "formerly unknown to the muse, are now consecrated by his immortal verse; the Doon, the Lugar, the Ayr, the Nith, and the Cluden, will in future, like the Yarrow, the Tweed, and the Tay, be considered as classic streams, and their borders will be trod with new and superior emotions."

It is to be lamented that, owing to the dialect in which his poems are for the most part written, they are not sufficiently intelligible to English readers. His popular songs have given him much celebrity in his own country.†

Unhappily the fame of his genius attracted around him the gay and social, and his fine powers were wasted in midnight orgies; till he ultimately fell a victim to intemperance, in the thirty-eighth year of his age;‡ furnishing one more melancholy instance of genius not advancing the moral welfare and dignity of its possessor, because he rejected the guidance of prudence, and forgot that it is religion alone that can make men truly great or happy. How often is genius like a comet, eccentric in its course, which, after astonishing the world by its splendor, suddenly expires and vanishes!

We think that if a selection could be made from his works, excluding what is offensive, and retaining beauties which all must appreciate, an acceptable service might be rendered to the British public. Who can withhold their admiration from passages like these?

"Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."

Speaking of religion, he observes:—

"'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,
'Tis *this* that gilds the horror of our night. [few;
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis this that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels his dart;
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

We would also quote the following beautiful lines from his Cotter's (or Cottager's) Saturday Night, which represents the habits of domestic piety in humble life.

"Perhaps the *Christian volume* is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How *He* who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped:
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land.
How *he*, who lone in *Patmos* banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great *Babylon* doom'd by Heaven's command."

"Then kneeling, unto Heaven's Eternal King,
The *saint*, the *father*, and the *husband* prays:*
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
That *thus* they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning their *Creator's* praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While time moves round in an eternal sphere."

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 27, 1787.

Dear Sir,—I have not yet taken up the pen again, except to write to you. The little taste that I have had of your company, and your kindness in finding me out, make me wish that we were nearer neighbors, and that there were not so great a disparity in our years—that is to say, not that you were older, but that I were younger. Could we have met in early life, I flatter myself that we might have been more intimate than now we are likely to be. But you shall not find me slow to cultivate such a measure of your regard as your friends of your own age can spare me. When your route shall lie through this country, I shall hope that the same kindness which has prompted you twice to call on me, will prompt you again, and I shall be happy if, on a future occasion, I may be able to give you a more cheerful reception than can be expected from an invalid. My health and spirits are considerably improved, and I once more associate with my neighbors. My head, however, has been the worst part of me, and still continues so: is subject to giddiness and pain, maladies very unfavorable to poetical employment; but a preparation of the lark, which I take regularly, has so far been of service to me in those respects, as to encourage in me a hope that, by perseverance in the use of it, I may possibly find myself qualified to resume the translation of Homer.

When I cannot walk, I read, and perhaps more than is good for me. But I cannot be idle. The only mercy that I show myself in this respect, is, that I read nothing that requires much closeness of application. I lately finished the perusal of a book, which in former years I have more than once attacked, but never till now conquered; some other

* Dr. Currie.

† The national air of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," is familiar to every one.

‡ He died in 1796.

* This is said to be a portrait of his own father's domestic piety.

book always interfered before I could finish it. The work I mean is Barclay's "Argenis;"* and, if ever you allow yourself to read for mere amusement, I can recommend it to you (provided you have not already perused it) as the most amusing romance that ever was written. It is the only one, indeed, of an old date, that I ever had the patience to go through with. It is interesting in a high degree; richer in incident than can be imagined; full of surprises, which the reader never forestalls; and yet free from all entanglement and confusion. The style, too, appears to be such as would not dishonor Tacitus himself.

Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country, through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is bright, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbor of mine. But his uncouth dialect spoiled all, and, before he had half read him through he was quite bamboozled.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Aug. 30, 1787.

My dearest Cousin,—Though it costs me something to write, it would cost me more to be silent. My intercourse with my neighbors being renewed, I can no longer seem to forget how many reasons there are why you, especially, should not be neglected; no neighbor, indeed, but the kindest of my friends, and ere long, I hope, an inmate.

My health and spirits seem to be mending daily. To what end I know not, neither will conjecture, but endeavor, as far as I can, to be content that they do so. I use exercise, and take the air in the park and wilderness. I read much, but as yet write not. Our friends at the Hall make themselves more and more amiable in our account, by treating us rather as old friends than as friends newly acquired. There are few days in which we do not meet, and I am now almost as much at home in their house as in our own. Mr. Throckmorton, having long since put me in possession of all his ground, has now given me possession of his library. An acquisition of great value to me, who never have been able to live without books, since I first knew my letters, and who have no books of my own. By his means I have been so well supplied, that I have not even yet looked at the "Lounger," for which, however, I do not forget that I am obliged to you. *His* turn comes next, and I shall probably begin him to-morrow.

Mr. George Throckmorton is at the Hall. I thought I had known these brothers long enough to have found out all their talents and accomplishments. But I was mistaken. The day before yesterday, after having walked with us, they *carried* us up to the library (a more accurate writer would have said *conducted* us); and then they showed me the contents of an immense portfolio, the work of their own hands. It was furnished with drawings of the architectural kind, executed in a most masterly manner, and, among others, contained outside and inside views of the Pantheon, I mean the Roman one. They were all, I believe, made at Rome. Some men may be estimated at a first interview, but the Throckmortons must be seen often and known long before one can understand all their value.*

They often inquire after you, and ask me whether you visit Weston this autumn. I answer, yes; and I charge you, my dearest cousin, to authenticate my information. Write to me, and tell us when we may expect to see you. We were disappointed that we had no letter from you this morning. You will find me coated and buttoned according to your recommendation.

I write but little, because writing has become new to me; but I shall come on by degrees. Mrs. Unwin begs to be affectionately remembered to you. She is in tolerable health, which is the chief comfort here that I have to boast of.

Yours, my dearest cousin, as ever,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 4, 1787.

My dearest Coz.,—Come, when thou canst come, secure of being always welcome! All that is here is thine, together with the hearts of those who dwell here. I am only sorry that your journey hither is necessarily postponed beyond the time when I did hope to have seen you; sorry, too, that my uncle's infirmities are the occasion of it. But years *will* have their course and their effect; they are happiest, so far as this life is concerned, who like him escape those effects the longest,

* A Latin romance, once celebrated. Barclay was the author of two celebrated Latin romances; the first entitled Euphormio, a political, satirical work, chiefly levelled against the Jesuits, and dedicated to James I. His Argenis is a political allegory, descriptive of the state of Europe, and especially of France, during the League. Sir Walter Scott alludes to the Euphormio in his notes on Marmion, canto 3rd.

* With Mr., afterwards Sir John Throckmorton, the Editor had not the opportunity of being acquainted; but he would fail in rendering what is due to departed worth, if he did not record the high sense which he entertained of the virtues of his brother, Sir George Throckmorton. To the polished manners of the gentleman he united the accomplishments of the scholar and the man of taste and refinement; while the attention paid to the wants, the comforts, and instruction of the poor, in which another participated with equal promptness and delight, has left behind a memorial that will not soon be forgotten.

and who do not grow old before their time. Trouble and anguish do that for some, which only longevity does for others. A few months since I was older than your father is now, and, though I have lately recovered, as Falstaff says, *some smatch of my youth*, I have but little confidence, in truth none, in so flattering a change, but expect, *when I least expect it*, to wither again. The past is a pledge for the future.

Mr. G. is here, Mrs. Throckmorton's uncle. He is lately arrived from Italy, where he has resided several years, and is so much the gentleman that it is impossible to be more so. Sensible, polite, obliging; slender in his figure, and in manners most engaging —every way worthy to be related to the Throckmortons.*

I have read Savary's Travels into Egypt;† Memoires du Baron de Tott; Fenn's Original Letters; the letters of Frederick of Bohemia; and am now reading Memoires d'Henri de Lorraine, Duc de Guise. I have also read Barclay's Argenis, a Latin romance, and the best romance that ever was written—all these, together with Madan's Letters to Priestly, and several pamphlets, within these two months. So I am a great reader.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 15, 1787.

My dearest Cousin,—on Monday last I was invited to meet your friend, Miss J——, at the Hall, and there we found her. Her good nature, her humorous manner, and her good sense, are charming, insomuch that even I, who was never much addicted to speech-making, and who at present find myself particularly indisposed to it, could not help saying at parting, I am glad that I have seen you, and sorry that I have seen so little of you. We were sometimes many in company: on Thursday we were fifteen, but we had not altogether so much vivacity and cleverness as Miss J——, whose talent at mirth-making has this rare property to recommend it, that nobody suffers by it.

I am making a gravel-walk for winter use, under a warm hedge in the orchard. It shall be furnished with a low seat for your accommodation, and if you do but like it I shall be satisfied. In wet weather, or rather after wet weather, when the street is dirty, it will suit you well, for, lying on an easy declivity through its whole length, it must of course be immediately dry.

You are very much wished for by our friends at the Hall—how much by me I will not tell you till the second week in October.

Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 29, 1787.

My dear Coz.,—I thank you for your political intelligence: retired as we are, and seemingly excluded from the world, we are not indifferent to what passes in it; on the contrary, the arrival of a newspaper, at the present juncture, never fails to furnish us with a theme for discussion, short indeed, but satisfactory, for we seldom differ in opinion.

I have received such an impression of the Turks, from the Memoirs of Baron de Tott, which I read lately, that I can hardly help presaging the conquest of that empire by the Russians. The disciples of Mahomet are such babies in modern tactics, and so enervated by the use of their favorite drug, so fatally secure in their predestinarian dream, and so prone to a spirit of mutiny against their leaders, that nothing less can be expected. In fact, they had not been their own masters at this day, had but the Russians known the weakness of their enemies half so well as they undoubtedly know it now. Add to this, that there is a popular prophecy current in both countries, that Turkey is one day to fall under the Russian sceptre. A prophecy, which, from whatever authority it be derived, as it will naturally encourage the Russians, and dispirit the Turks, in exact proportion to the degree of credit it has obtained on both sides, has a direct tendency to effect its own accomplishment. In the meantime, if I wish them conquered, it is only because I think it will be a blessing to them to be governed by any other hand than their own. For under heaven has there never been a throne so execrably tyrannical as theirs. The heads of the innocent that have been cut off to gratify the humor or caprice of their tyrants, could they be all collected and discharged against the walls of their city, would not leave one stone on another.

O that you were here this beautiful day! It is too fine by half to be spent in London. I have a perpetual din in my head, and,

* T. Giffard, Esq., is the person here intended, for whom the verses were composed, inserted in a separate part of this volume.

† Savary's travels in Egypt and the Levant, from 1776 to 1780.—They have acquired sufficient popularity to be translated into most of the European languages. He died in 1788

Baron de Tott's memoirs.—The severe reflections in which this writer indulged against the Turkish government, and his imprudent exposure of its political weakness, subjected him to a series of hardships and imprisonment, which seem almost to exceed the bounds of credibility.

Sir John Fenn's Letters.—Written by various members of the Paston family, during the historical period of the wars between the two houses of York and Lancaster. He died in 1794.

Henri de Lorraine, Duc de Guise.—This celebrated character was the great opponent of the Huguenots, and founder of the League in the time of Henry III., of France. He was assassinated at Blois, at the instigation, it is said, of his sovereign, to whom his influence had become formidable.

though I am not deaf, hear nothing aright, neither my own voice, nor that of others. I am under a tub, from which tub accept my best love.

Yours, W. C.

The following letter discovers an afflicting instance of the delusion under which the interesting mind of Cowper labored in some particular instances.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston Underwood, Oct. 2, 1787.

My dear Friend,—After a long but necessary interruption of our correspondence, I return to it again, in one respect at least better qualified for it than before; I mean by a belief of your identity, which for thirteen years I did not believe. The acquisition of this light, if light it may be called which leaves me as much in the dark as ever on the most interesting subjects, releases me however from the disagreeable suspicion that I am addressing myself to you as the friend whom I loved and valued so highly in my better days, while in fact you are not that friend, but a stranger. I can now write to you without seeming to act a part, and without having any need to charge myself with dissimulation;—a charge from which, in that state of mind and under such an uncomfortable persuasion, I knew not how to exculpate myself, and which, as you will easily conceive, not seldom made my correspondence with you a burden. Still, indeed, it wants, and is likely to want, that best ingredient which can alone make it truly pleasant either to myself or you—that spirituality which once enlivened all our intercourse. You will tell me, no doubt, that the knowledge I have gained is an earnest of more and more valuable information, and that the dispersion of the clouds, in part, promises, in due time, their complete dispersion. I should be happy to believe it; but the power to do so is at present far from me. Never was the mind of man benighted to the degree that mine has been. The storms that have assailed me would have overset the faith of every man that ever had any; and the very remembrance of them, even after they have been long passed by, makes hope impossible.

Mrs. Unwin, whose poor bark is still held together, though shattered by being tossed and agitated so long at the side of mine, does not forget yours and Mrs. Newton's kindness on this last occasion. Mrs. Newton's offer to come to her assistance, and your readiness to have rendered us the same service, could you have hoped for any salutary effect of your presence, neither Mrs. Unwin nor myself undervalue, nor shall presently forget. But you judged right when you supposed, that even your company would have been no relief to me; the company of my father or my brother, could they have returned from the dead to visit me, would have been none to me.

We are busied in preparing for the reception of Lady Hesketh, whom we expect here shortly. We have beds to put up, and furniture for beds to make; workmen, and scouring, and bustle. Mrs. Unwin's time has of course been lately occupied to a degree that made writing to her impracticable; and she excused herself the rather, knowing my intentions to take her office. It does not, however, suit me to write much at a time. This last tempest has left my nerves in a worse condition than it found them; my head especially, though better informed, is more infirm than ever. I will therefore only add our joint love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, and that I am, my dear friend,

Your affectionate W. C.*

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 19, 1787.

Dear Sir,—A summons from Johnston, which I received yesterday, calls my attention once more to the business of translation. Before I begin, I am willing to catch though but a short opportunity to acknowledge your last favor. The necessity of applying myself with all diligence to a long work, that has been but too long interrupted, will make my opportunities of writing rare in future.

Air and exercise are necessary to all men, but particularly so to the man whose mind labors, and to him who has been all his life accustomed to much of both they are necessary in the extreme. My time, since we parted, has been devoted entirely to the recovery of health and strength for this service, and I am willing to hope with good effect. Ten months have passed since I discontinued my poetical efforts; I do not expect to find the same readiness as before, till exercise of the neglected faculty, such as it is, shall have restored it to me.

You find yourself, I hope, by this time as comfortably situated in your new abode as in a new abode one can be. I enter perfectly into all your feelings on occasion of the change. A sensible mind cannot do violence even to a local attachment without much pain. When my father died, I was young, too young to have reflected much. He was Rector of Berkhamstead, and there I was born. It had never occured to me that a parson has no fee-simple in the house and glebe he occupies. There was neither tree,

* Private correspondence.

* This letter was addressed to Mr. Newton, on the writer's recovery from an attack of his grievous constitutional malady, which lasted eight months.

nor gate, nor stile, in all that country, to which I did not feel a relation, and the house itself I preferred to a palace. I was sent for from London to attend him in his last illness, and he died just before I arrived. Then, and not till then, I felt for the first time that I and my native place were disunited forever. I sighed a long adieu to fields and woods, from which I once thought I should never be parted, and was at no time so sensible of their beauties as just when I left them all behind me, to return no more. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Oct. 20, 1787.

My dear Friend,—My indisposition could not be of a worse kind. Had I been afflicted with a fever, or confined by a broken bone, neither of these cases would have made it impossible that we should meet. I am truly sorry that the impediment was insurmountable while it lasted, for such in fact it was. The sight of any face, except Mrs. Unwin's, was to me an insupportable grievance; and when it has happened that, by *forcing* himself into my hiding place, some friend has found me out, he has had no great cause to exult in his success, as Mr. Bull can tell you. From this dreadful condition of mind I emerged suddenly; so suddenly, that Mrs. Unwin, having no notice of such a change herself, could give none to anybody; and when it obtained, how long it might last, or how far it was to be depended on, was a matter of the greatest uncertainty. It affects me on the recollection with the more concern, because I learn from your last, that I have not only lost an interview with you myself, but have stood in the way of visits that you would have gladly paid to others, and who would have been happy to have seen you. You should have forgotten (but you are not good at forgetting your friends) that such a creature as myself existed.

I rejoice that Mrs. Cowper has been so comfortably supported. She must have severely felt the loss of her son. She has an affectionate heart toward her children, and could but be sensible of the bitterness of such a cup. But God's presence sweetens every bitter. Desertion is the only evil that a Christian cannot bear.

I have done a deed for which I find some people thank me little. Perhaps I have only burned my fingers, and had better not have meddled. Last Sunday se'nnight I drew up a petition to Lord Dartmouth, in behalf of Mr. Postlethwaite. We signed it and all the principal inhabitants of Weston followed our example.† What we had done was soon known in Olney, and an evening or two ago Mr. R—— called here to inform me (for that seemed to be his errand) how little the measure that I had taken was relished by some of his neighbors. I vindicated my proceeding on the principles of justice and mercy to a laborious and well-deserving minister, to whom I had the satisfaction to find that none could allege one serious objection, and that all, except one, who objected at all, are persons who in reality ought to have no vote upon such a question. The affair seems still to remain undecided. If his lordship waits, which I a little suspect, till his steward shall have taken the sense of those with whom he is likely to converse upon the subject, and means to be determined by his report, Mr. Postlethwaite's case is desperate.

I beg that you will remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon. We rejoice in Mrs. Newton's amended health, and when we can hear that she is restored, shall rejoice still more. The next summer may prove more propitious to us than the past: if it should, we shall be happy to receive you and yours. Mrs. Unwin unites with me in love to you all three. She is tolerably well, and her writing was prevented by nothing but her expectation that I should soon do it myself.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Nov. 10, 1787.

The parliament, my dearest cousin, prorogued continually, is a meteor dancing before my eyes, promising me my wish only to disappoint me, and none but the king and his ministers can tell when you and I shall come together. I hope, however, that the period, though so often postponed, is not far distant, and that once more I shall behold you, and experience your power to make winter gay and sprightly.

I have a kitten the drollest of all creatures that ever wore a cat's skin. Her gambols are not to be described, and would be incredible, if they could. In point of size she is likely to be a kitten always, being extremely small of her age, but time, I suppose, that spoils everything, will make her also a cat. You will see her, I hope, before that melancholy period shall arrive, for no wisdom that she may gain by experience and reflection hereafter will compensate the loss of her present hilarity. She is dressed in a tortoise-shell suit, and I know that you will delight in her.

Mrs. Throckmorton carries us to-morrow in her chaise to Chicheley. The event, however, must be supposed to depend on elements, at least on the state of the atmos-

* Private correspondence.

† The living of Olney had become vacant by the death of the Rev. Moses Brown, and an attempt was made to secure it for the Rev. Mr. Postlethwaite, the curate. Mr. Bean was ultimately appointed.

phere, which is turbulent beyond measure. Yesterday it thundered, last night it lightened, and at three this morning I saw the sky as red as a city in flames could have made it. I have a leech in a bottle that foretells all these prodigies and convulsions of nature. No, not as you will naturally conjecture, by articulate utterance of oracular notices, but by a variety of gesticulations, which here I have not room to give an account of. Suffice it to say, that no change of weather surprises him, and that, in point of the earliest and most accurate intelligence he is worth all the barometers in the world. None of them, all, indeed, can make the least pretence to foretell thunder—a species of capacity of which he has given the most unequivocal evidence. I gave but six-pence for him, which is a groat more than the market price, though he is in fact, or rather would be, if leeches were not found in every ditch, an invaluable acquisition. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Nov. 16, 1787.

I thank you for the solicitude that you express on the subject of my present studies. The work is undoubtedly long and laborious, but it has an end, and, proceeding leisurely, with a due attention to the use of air and exercise, it is possible that I may live to finish it. Assure yourself of one thing, that, though to a by-stander it may seem an occupation surpassing the powers of a constitution never very athletic, and at present not a little the worse for wear, I can invent for myself no employment that does not exhaust my spirits more. I will not pretend to account for this; I will only say, that it is not the language of predilection for a favorite amusement, but that the fact is really so. I have even found that those plaything-avocations which one may execute almost without any attention, fatigue me, and wear me away, while such as engage me much and attach me closely, are rather serviceable to me than otherwise. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Nov. 27, 1787.

It is the part of wisdom, my dearest cousin, to sit down contented under the demands of necessity, because they are such. I am sensible that you cannot, in my uncle's present infirm state, and of which it is not possible to expect any considerable amendment, indulge either us or yourself with a journey to Weston. Yourself, I say, both because I know it will give you pleasure to see *Causidice mi** once more, especially in the comfortable abode where you have placed him, and because, after so long an imprisonment in London, you, who love the country, and have a taste for it, would, of course, be glad to return to it. For my own part, to me it is ever new, and though I have now been an inhabitant of this village a twelvemonth, and have, during the half of that time, been at liberty to expatiate and to make discoveries, I am daily finding out fresh scenes and walks which you would never be satisfied with enjoying—some of them are unapproachable by you, either on foot or in your carriage. Had you twenty toes (whereas I suppose you have but ten) you could not reach them; and coach-wheels have never been seen there since the flood. Before it indeed, (as Burnet says, that the earth was then perfectly free from all inequalities in its surface,)* they might have been seen there every day. We have other walks, both upon hill tops and in valleys beneath, some of which, by the help of your carriage, and many of them without its help, would be always at your command.

On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and, being desired to sit, spoke as follows: "Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All-saints in Northampton; brother of Mr. C. the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You will do me a great favor, Sir, if you would furnish me with one." To this I replied, "Mr. C., you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, C——, the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose."—"Alas! Sir, I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading that the people of our town cannot understand him." I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, "Perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason." But on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and, pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The wagon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part

* The appellation which Sir Thomas Hesketh used to give him in jest, when he was of the Temple.

* See Burnet's Theory of the Earth, in which book, as well as by other writers, the formation of mountains is attributed to the agency of the great deluge. The deposit of marine shells is alleged as favoring this hypothesis.

with my effusions in the mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals! I have written *one* that serves *two hundred* persons.*

A few days since I received a second very obliging letter from Mr. M——,† He tells me that his own papers, which are by far (he is sorry to say it) the most numerous, are marked V. I. Z.‡ Accordingly, my dear, I am happy to find that I am engaged in a correspondence with Mr. Viz, a gentleman for whom I have always entertained the profoundest veneration. But the serious fact is, that the papers distinguished by those signatures have ever pleased me most, and struck me as the work of a sensible man, who knows the world well, and has more of Addison's delicate humor than anybody.

A poor man begged food at the hall lately. The cook gave him some vermicelli soup. He ladled it about some time with the spoon, and then returned it to her, "I am a poor man it is true, and I am very hungry, but yet I cannot eat broth with maggots in it." Once more, my dear, a thousand thanks for your box full of good things, useful things, and beautiful things.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1787.

I am glad, my dearest coz, that my last letter proved so diverting. You may assure yourself of the literal truth of the whole narration, and that, however droll, it was not in the least indebted to any embellishments of mine.

You say well, my dear, that in Mr. Throckmorton we have a peerless neighbor; we have so. In point of information upon all important subjects, in respect too of expression and address, and, in short, everything that enters into the idea of a gentleman, I have not found his equal (not often) anywhere. Were I asked, who in my judgment approaches nearest to him in all his amiable qualities and qualifications, I should certainly answer, his brother George, who, if he be not his exact counterpart, endued with precisely the same measure of the same accomplishments, is nevertheless deficient in none of them, and is of a character singularly agreeable, in respect of a certain manly, I had almost said heroic, frankness, with which his air strikes one almost immediately. So far as his opportunities have gone, he has ever been as friendly and obliging to us as we could wish him, and, were he lord of the hall to-morrow, would, I dare say, conduct himself towards us in such a manner as to leave us as little sensible as possible of the removal of its present owners. But all this I say, my dear, merely for the sake of stating the matter as it is; not in order to obviate or to prove the inexpedience of any future plan of yours concerning the place of our residence. Providence and time shape everything—I should rather say Providence alone, for time has often no hand in the wonderful changes that we experience; they take place in a moment. It is not therefore worth while perhaps to consider much what we will or will not do in years to come, concerning which all that I can say with certainty at present is, that those years will be the most welcome in which I can see the most of you.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Dec. 6, 1787.

My dear Friend,—A short time since, by the help of Mrs. Throckmorton's chaise, Mrs. Unwin and I reached Chichely. "Now," said I to Mrs. Chester, "I shall write boldly to your brother Walter, and will do it immediately. I have passed the gulf that parted us, and he will be glad to hear it." But let not the man who translates Homer be so presumptuous as to have a will of his own, or to promise anything. A fortnight has, I suppose, elapsed since I paid this visit, and I am only now beginning to fulfil what I then undertook to accomplish without delay. The old Grecian must answer for it.

I spent my morning there so agreeably that I have ever since regretted more sensibly that there are five miles of a dirty country interposed between us. For the increase of my pleasure, I had the good fortune to find your brother, the Bishop, there. We had much talk about many things, but most, I believe about Homer; and great satisfaction it gave me to find that on the most important points of that subject his Lordship and I were exactly of one mind. In the course of our conversation, he produced from his pocket-book a translation of the first ten or twelve lines of the Iliad, and, in order to leave my judgment free, informed me kindly at the same time that they were not his own. I read them, and, according to the best of my recollection of the original, found them well executed. The Bishop indeed acknowledged that they were not faultless, neither did I find

* We introduce one stanza from these verses:—

"Like crowded forest trees we stand,
And some are marked to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all."

† (Henry Mackenzie.) This popular writer first became know as the author of "The Man of Feeling," which was published in 1771, and of other works of a similar character. He afterwards became a member of a literary society, established at Edinburgh, in 1778, under the title of the Mirror Club. Here originated the Mirror and Lounger, periodical essays written after the manner of the Spectator, of which he was the editor and principal contributor. He died in 1831.

‡ In a periodical called "The Lounger."

them so. Had they been such, I should have felt their perfection as a discouragement hardly to be surmounted; for at that passage I have labored more abundantly than at any other, and hitherto with the least success. I am convinced that Homer placed it at the threshold of his work as a scarecrow to all translators. Now, Walter, if thou knowest the author of this version, and it be not treason against thy brother's confidence in thy secrecy, declare him to me. Had I been so happy as to have seen the Bishop again before he left this country, I should certainly have asked him the question, having a curiosity upon the matter that is extremely troublesome.*

The awkward situation in which you found yourself on receiving a visit from an authoress, whose works, though presented to you long before, you had never read, made me laugh, and it was no sin against my friendship for you to do so. It was a ridiculous distress, and I can laugh at it even now. I hope she catechized you well. How did you extricate yourself?—Now laugh at me. The clerk of the parish of All Saints, in the town of Northampton, having occasion for a poet, has appointed me to the office. I found myself obliged to comply. The bell-man comes next, and then, I think, though even borne upon your swan's quill, I can soar no higher!

I am, my dear friend, faithfully yours,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 10, 1786.

I thank you for the snip of cloth, commonly called a pattern. At present I have two coats, and but one back. If at any time, hereafter, I should find myself possessed of fewer coats, or more backs, it will be of use to me.

Though I have thought proper never to take any notice of the arrival of my MSS. together with the *other good things* in the box, yet certain it is that I received them. I have furbished up the tenth book till it is as bright as silver, and am now occupied in bestowing the same labor upon the eleventh. The twelfth and thirteenth are in the hands of ——, and the fourteenth and fifteenth are ready to succeed them. This notable job is the delight of my heart, and how sorry shall I be when it is ended!

The smith and the carpenter, my dear, are both in the room hanging a bell; if I therefore make a thousand blunders let the said intruders answer for them all.

I thank you, my dear, for your history of the G——s. What changes in that family! And how many thousand families have in the same time experienced changes as violent as theirs! The course of a rapid river is the justest of all emblems to express the variableness of our scene below. Shakspeare says, none ever bathed himself twice in the same stream, and it is equally true that the world upon which we close our eyes at night is never the same with that on which we open them in the morning.

I do not always say, give my love to my uncle,* because he knows that I always love him. I do not always present Mrs. Unwin's love to you, partly for the same reason, (deuce take the smith and the carpenter,) and partly because I forget it. But to present my own, I forget never, for I always have to finish my letter, which I know not how to do, my dearest Coz, without telling you, that I am

Ever yours, W. C.

* The author was Lord Bagot.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 13, 1787.

Dear Sir,—Unless my memory deceives me, I forewarned you that I should prove a very unpunctual correspondent. The work that lies before me engages unavoidably my whole attention. The length of it, the spirit of it, and the exactness that is requisite to its due performance, are so many most interesting subjects of consideration to me, who find that my best attempts are only introductory to others, and that what to-day I suppose finished to morrow I must begin again. Thus it fares with a translator of Homer. To exhibit the majesty of such a poet in a modern language is a task that no man can estimate the difficulty of till he attempts it. To paraphrase him loosely, to hang him with trappings that do not belong to him, all this is comparatively easy. But to represent him with only his own ornaments, and still to preserve his dignity, is a labor that, if I hope in any measure to achieve it, I am sensible can only be achieved by the most assiduous and most unremitting attention. Our studies, however different in themselves, in respect of the means by which they are to be successfully carried on, bear some resemblance to each other. A perseverance that nothing can discourage, a minuteness of observation that suffers nothing to escape, and a determination not to be seduced from the straight line that lies before us by any images with which fancy may present us, are essentials that should be common to us both. There are, perhaps, few arduous undertakings that are not in fact more arduous than we at first supposed them. As we proceed, difficulties increase upon us, but our hopes gather strength also, and we conquer difficulties which, could we have foreseen them, we should never have had the boldness to

* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

encounter. May this be your experience, as I doubt not that it will. You possess by nature all that is necessary to success in the profession that you have chosen. What remains is in your own power. They say of poets that they must be born such: so must mathematicians, so must great generals, and so must lawyers, and so indeed must men of all denominations, or it is not possible that they should excel. But, with whatever faculties we are born, and to whatever studies our genius may direct us, studies they must still be. I am persuaded that Milton did not write his "Paradise Lost," nor Homer his "Iliad," nor Newton his "Principia," without immense labor. Nature gave them a bias to their respective pursuits, and that strong propensity, I suppose, is what we mean by genius. The rest they gave themselves. "Macte esto," therefore have no fears for the issue!

I have had a second kind letter from your friend, Mr. ——, which I have just answered. I must not, I find, hope to see him here, at least, I must not much expect it. He has a family that does not permit him to fly southward. I have also a notion that we three could spend a few days comfortably together, especially in a country like this, abounding in scenes with which I am sure you would both be delighted. Having lived till lately at some distance from the spot that I now inhabit, and having never been master of any sort of vehicle whatever, it is but just now that I begin myself to be acquainted with the beauties of our situation. To you I may hope one time or other to show them, and shall be happy to do it when an opportunity offers.

Yours, most affectionately, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 1, 1788.

Now for another story almost incredible! A story that would be quite such, if it was not certain that you give me credit for anything. I have read the poem for the sake of which you sent the paper, and was much entertained by it. You think it perhaps, as very well you may, the only piece of that kind that was ever produced. It is indeed original, for I dare say Mr. Merry* never saw mine; but certainly it is not unique. For most true it is, my dear, that ten years since, having a letter to write to a friend of mine to whom I could write anything, I filled a whole sheet with a composition, both in measure and in manner, precisely similar. I have in vain searched for it. It is either burnt or lost. Could I have found it, you would have had double postage to pay. For that one man in Italy and another in England, who never saw each other, should stumble on a species of verse, in which no other man ever wrote (and I believe that to be the case) and upon a style and manner too of which, I suppose, that neither of them had ever seen an example, appears to me so extraordinary a fact that I must have sent you mine, whatever it had cost you, and am really vexed that I cannot authenticate the story by producing a voucher. The measure I recollect to have been perfectly the same, and as to the manner I am equally sure of that, and from this circumstance, that Mrs. Unwin and I never laughed more at any production of mine, perhaps not even at John Gilpin. But for all this, my dear, you must, as I said, give me credit, for the thing itself is gone to that limbo of vanity where alone, says Milton, things lost on earth are to be met with. Said limbo is, as you know, in the moon, whither I could not at present convey myself without a good deal of difficulty and inconvenience.

This morning, being the morning of new year's day, I sent to the hall a copy of verses, addressed to Mrs. Throckmorton, entitled "The Wish, or the Poet's New Year's Gift." We dine there to-morrow, when I suppose I shall hear news of them.* Their kindness is so great, and they seize with such eagerness every opportunity of doing all they think will please us, that I held myself almost in duty bound to treat them with this stroke of my profession.

The small-pox has done, I believe, all that it has to do at Weston. Old folks, and even women with child, have been inoculated.

* He belonged to what was formerly known by the name of the Della Crusca School, at Florence, whose writings were characterised by an affectation of style and sentiment, which obtained its admirers in this country. The indignant muse of Gifford, in his well-known Baviad and Maeviad, at length vindicated the cause of sound taste and judgment; and such was the effect of his caustic satire, that this spurious and corrupt style rapidly disappeared.

* The poet's wish is so expressive of the poet's taste, and there is so beautiful a turn in these complimentary verses, that we cannot resist the pleasure of inserting them.

THE POET'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT
TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

"Maria! I have every good
For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favor then not yet possess'd
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already blest,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day,
Which fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfill'd."

We talk of our freedom, and some of us are free enough, but not the poor. Dependent as they are upon parish bounty, they are sometimes obliged to submit to impositions which, perhaps in France itself, could hardly be paralleled. Can man or woman be said to be free, who is commanded to take a distemper sometimes, at least, mortal, and in circumstances most likely to make it so? No circumstance whatever was permitted to exempt the inhabitants of Weston. The old as well as the young, and the pregnant as well as they who had only themselves within them, have been inoculated. Were I asked who is the most arbitrary sovereign on earth, I should answer, neither the king of France, nor the grand signior, but an overseer of the poor in England.*

I am as heretofore occupied with Homer: my present occupation is the revisal of all I have done, viz., the first fifteen books. I stand amazed at my own exceeding dexterity in the business, being verily persuaded that, as far as I have gone, I have improved the work to double its value.

That you may begin the new year and end it in all health and happiness, and many more when the present shall have been long an old one, is the ardent wish of Mrs. Unwin and of yours, my dearest coz., most cordially,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 5, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for your information concerning the author of the translation of those lines. Had a man of less note and ability than Lord Bagot produced it, I should have been discouraged. As it is, I comfort myself with the thought that even he accounted it an achievement worthy of his powers, and that even he found it difficult. Though I never had the honor to be known to his lordship, I remember him well at Westminster, and the reputation in which he stood there. Since that time I have never seen him except once, many years ago, in the House of Commons, when I heard him speak on the subject of a drainage bill better than any member there.

My first thirteen books have been criticised in London; have been by me accommodated to those criticisms, returned to London in their improved state, and sent back to Weston with an imprimatur. This would satisfy some poets less anxious than myself about what they expose in public; but it has not satisfied me. I am now revising them again by the light of my own critical taper, and make more alterations than at first. But are they improvements? you will ask. Is not the spirit of the work endangered by all this attention to correctness? I think and hope that it is not. Being well aware of the possibility of such a catastrophe, I guard particularly against it. Where I find that a servile adherence to the original would render the passage less animated than it would be, I still, as at the first, allow myself a liberty. On all other occasions I prune with an unsparing hand, determined that there shall not be found in the whole translation an idea that is not Homer's. My ambition is to produce the closest copy possible, and at the same time as harmonious as I know how to make it. This being my object, you will no longer think, if indeed you have thought it at all, that I am unnecessarily and over-much industrious. The original surpasses everything; it is of an immense length, is composed in the best language ever used upon earth, and deserves, indeed demands, all the labor that any translator, be he who he may, can possibly bestow on it. Of this I am sure; and your brother, the good bishop, is of the same mind, that at present mere English readers know no more of Homer in reality than if he had never been translated. That consideration indeed it was, which mainly induced me to the undertaking; and if, after all, either through idleness or dotage upon what I have already done, I leave it chargeable with the same incorrectness as my predecessors, or indeed with any other that I may be able to amend, I had better have amused myself otherwise: and you, I know, are of my opinion.

I send you the clerk's verses, of which I told you. They are very clerk-like, as you will perceive. But plain truth in plain words seemed to me to be the *ne plus ultra* of composition on such an occasion. I might have attempted something very fine, but then the persons principally concerned, viz., my readers, would not have understood me. If it puts them in mind that they are mortal, its best end is answered.

My dear Walter, adieu!

Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 19, 1788.

When I have prose enough to fill my paper, which is always the case when I write to you, I cannot find in my heart to give a third part of it to verse. Yet this I must do, or I must make my packets more costly than worshipful, by doubling the postage upon you, which I should hold to be unreasonable. See then the true reason why I did not send you that same scribblement* till you desired it. The

* The discovery of vaccination, since the above period, has entitled the name of Jenner to rank among the benefactors of mankind.

* The verses on the new year.

thought which naturally presents itself to me on all such occasions is this:—Is not your cousin coming? Why are you impatient? Will it not be time enough to show her your fine things when she arrives?

Fine things indeed I have few. He who has Homer to transcribe may well be contented to do little else. As when an ass, being harnessed with ropes to a sand-cart, drags with hanging ears his heavy burden, neither filling the long-echoing streets with his harmonious bray, nor throwing up his heels behind, frolicsome and airy, as asses less engaged are wont to do; so I, satisfied to find myself indispensably obliged to render into the best possible English metre eight-and-forty Greek books, of which the two finest poems in the world consist, account it quite sufficient if I may at last achieve that labor, and seldom allow myself those pretty little vagaries in which I should otherwise delight, and of which, if I should live long enough, I intend hereafter to enjoy my fill.

This is the reason, my dear cousin, if I may be permitted to call you so in the same breath with which I have uttered this truly heroic comparison; this is the reason why I produce at present but few occasional poems, and the preceding reason is that which may account satisfactorily enough for my withholding the very few that I do produce. A thought sometimes strikes me before I rise; if it runs readily into verse, and I can finish it before breakfast, it is well; otherwise it dies and is forgotten; for all the subsequent hours are devoted to Homer.

The day before yesterday I saw for the first time Bunbury's* new print, the "Propagation of a Lie." Mr. Throckmorton sent it for the amusement of our party. Bunbury sells humor by the yard, and is, I suppose, the first vender of it who ever did so. He cannot therefore be said to have humor without measure (pardon a pun, my dear, from a man who has not made one before these forty years) though he may certainly be said to be immeasurably droll.

The original thought is good, and the exemplification of it in those very expressive figures, admirable. A poem on the same subject, displaying all that is displayed in those attitudes and in those features (for faces they can hardly be called) would be most excellent. The affinity of the two arts, viz., verse and painting, has been often observed; possibly the happiest illustration of it would be found, if some poet would ally himself to some draughtsman, as Bunbury, and undertake to write everything he should draw. Then let a musician be admitted of the party. He should compose the said poem, adapting notes to it exactly accommodated to the theme; so should the sister arts be proved to be indeed sisters, and the world die of laughing. W. C.

* The celebrated caricaturist.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Jan. 21, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Your last letter informed us that you were likely to be much occupied for some time in writing on a subject that must be interesting to a person of your feelings—the slave trade. I was unwilling to interrupt your progress in so good a work, and have therefore enjoined myself a longer silence than I should otherwise have thought excusable; though, to say the truth, did not our once intimate fellowship in the things of God recur to my remembrance, and present me with something like a warrant for doing it, I should hardly prevail with myself to write at all. Letters, such as mine, to a person of a character such as yours, are like snow in harvest; and you well say, that if I will send you a letter that you can answer, I shall make your part of the business easier than it is. This I would gladly do: but though I abhor a vacuum as much as nature herself is said to do, yet a vacuum I am bound to feel of all such matter as may merit your perusal.

I expected that before this time I should have had the pleasure of seeing your friend Mr. Bean,† but his stay in this country was so short, that it was hardly possible he should find an opportunity to call. I have not only heard a high character of that gentleman from yourself, whose opinion of men, as well as of other matters, weighs more with me than anybody's; but from two or three different persons likewise, not ill qualified to judge. From all that I have heard, both from you and them, I have every reason to expect that I shall find him both an agreeable and useful neighbor; and if he can be content with me (for that seems doubtful, poet as I am, and now, alas! nothing more), it seems certain that I shall be highly satisfied with him.

Here is much shifting and changing of ministers. Two are passing away, and two are stepping into the places. Mr. B——, I suppose, whom I know not, is almost upon the wing; and Mr. P———,‡ with whom I have not been very much acquainted, is either going or gone. A Mr. C—— is come to occupy, for the present at least, the place of the former; and if he can possess himself of the two curacies of Ravenstone and Weston, will, I imagine, take up his abode here. Having, as I understood, no engagements elsewhere, he will doubtless be happy to obtain a lasting one in this country. What accept-

* Private correspondence.

† Formerly Vicar of Olney, and also one of the Librarians of the British Museum.

‡ Mr. Postlethwaite.

ance he finds among the people of Ravenstone I have not heard, but at Olney, where he has preached once, he was hailed as the sun by the Greenlanders after half a year of lamp-light.

Providence interposed to preserve me from the heaviest affliction that I can now suffer, or I had lately lost Mrs. Unwin, and in a way the most shocking imaginable. Having kindled her fire in the room where she dresses (an office that she always performs for herself), she placed the candle on the hearth, and, kneeling, addressed herself to her devotions. A thought struck her, while thus occupied, that the candle, being short, might possibly catch her clothes. She pinched it out with the tongs, and set it on the table. In a few minutes the chamber was so filled with smoke that her eyes watered, and it was hardly possible to see across it. Supposing that it proceeded from the chimney, she pushed the billets backward, and, while she did so, casting her eye downward, perceived that her dress was on fire. In fact, before she extinguished the candle, the mischief that she apprehended was begun; and when she related the matter to me, she showed me her clothes with a hole burnt in them as large as this sheet of paper. It is not possible, perhaps, that so tragical a death should overtake a person actually engaged in prayer, for her escape seems almost a miracle. Her presence of mind, by which she was enabled, without calling for help or waiting for it, to gather up her clothes and plunge them, burning as they were, in water, seems as wonderful a part of the occurrence as any. The very report of fire, though distant, has rendered hundreds torpid and incapable of self-succor; how much more was such a disability to be expected, when the fire had not seized a neighbor's house, or begun its devastations on our own, but was actually consuming the apparel that she wore, and seemed in possession of her person.

It draws toward supper-time. I therefore heartily wish you a good night; and, with our best affections to yourself, Mrs. Newton, and Miss Catlett, I remain, my dear friend, truly and warmly yours. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 30, 1788.

My dearest Coz.,—It is a fortnight since I heard from you, that is to say, a week longer than you have accustomed me to wait for a letter. I do not forget that you have recommended it to me, on occasions somewhat similar, to banish all anxiety, and to ascribe your silence only to the interruptions of company. Good advice, my dear, but not easily taken by a man circumstanced as I am. I have learned in the school of adversity, a school from which I have no expectation that I shall ever be dismissed, to apprehend the worst, and have ever found it the only course in which I can indulge myself without the least danger of incurring a disappointment. This kind of experience, continued through many years, has given me such an habitual bias to the gloomy side of everything, that I never have a moment's ease on any subject to which I am not indifferent. How then can I be easy when I am left afloat upon a sea of endless conjectures, of which you furnish the occasion. Write, I beseech you, and do not forget that I am now a battered actor upon this turbulent stage: that what little vigor of mind I ever had, of the self-supporting kind I mean, has long since been broken; and that, though I can bear nothing well, yet anything better than a state of ignorance concerning your welfare. I have spent hours in the night leaning upon my elbow, and wondering what your silence means. I entreat you once more to put an end to these speculations, which cost me more animal spirits than I can spare; if you cannot, without great trouble to yourself, which in your situation may very possibly be the case, contrive opportunities of writing so frequently as usual, only say it, and I am content. I will wait, if you desire it, as long for every letter, but then let them arrive at the period once fixed, exactly at the time, for my patience will not hold out an hour beyond it.* W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 1, 1788.

Pardon me, my dearest cousin, the mournful ditty that I sent you last. There are times when I see everything through a medium that distresses me to an insupportable degree, and that letter was written in one of them. A fog that had for three days obliterated all the beauties of Weston, and a north-east wind, might possibly contribute not a little to the melancholy that indited it. But my mind is now easy; your letter has made it so, and I feel myself as blithe as a bird in comparison. I love you, my cousin, and cannot suspect, either with or without cause, the least evil in which you may be concerned, without being greatly troubled! Oh, trouble! The portion of all mortals—but mine in particular; would I had never known thee, or could bid thee farewell forever; for I meet thee at every turn: my pillows are stuffed with thee, my very roses smell of thee, and even my cousin, who

* This letter proves how much the sensitive mind of Cowper was liable to be ruffled by external incidents. Life presents too many real sources of anxiety, to justify us in adding those which are imaginary and of our own creation.

would cure me of all trouble if she could, is sometimes innocently the cause of trouble to me.

I now see the unreasonableness of my late trouble, and would, if I could trust myself so far, promise never again to trouble either myself or you in the same manner, unless warranted by some more substantial ground of apprehension.

What I said concerning Homer, my dear, was spoken, or rather written, merely under the influence of a certain jocularity that I felt at that moment. I am in reality so far from thinking myself an ass, and my translation a sand-cart, that I rather seem, in my own account of the matter, one of those flaming steeds harnessed to the chariot of Apollo, of which we read in the works of the ancients. I have lately, I know not how, acquired a certain superiority to myself in this business, and in this last revisal have elevated the expression to a degree far surpassing its former boast. A few evenings since, I had an opportunity to try how far I might venture to expect such success of my labors as can alone repay them, by reading the first book of my Iliad to a friend of ours. He dined with you once at Olney. His name is Greatheed, a man of letters and of taste. He dined with us, and, the evening proving dark and dirty, we persuaded him to take a bed. I entertained him as I tell you. He heard me with great attention, and with evident symptoms of the highest satisfaction, which, when I had finished the exhibition, he put out of all doubt by expressions which I cannot repeat. Only this he said to Mrs. Unwin, while I was in another room, that he had never entered into the spirit of Homer before, nor had anything like a due conception of his manner. This I have said, knowing that it will please you, and will now say no more.

Adieu! my dear, will you never speak of coming to Weston more? W. C.

Mrs. King, to whom the following letter is addressed, was the wife of Mr. King, Rector of Perten Hall, near Kimbolton, and a connexion of the late Professor Martyn, well known for his botanical researches. The perusal of Cowper's Poems had been the means of conveying impressions of piety to her mind; and it was to record her gratitude, and to cultivate his acquaintance, that she wrote a letter, to which this is the reply.

TO MRS. KING, PERTEN HALL, NEAR KIMBOLTON, HUNTS.*

Weston Lodge, Feb. 12, 1788.

Dear Madam,—A letter from a lady who was once intimate with my brother could not fail of being most acceptable to me. I lost him just in the moment when those truths which have recommended my volumes to your approbation were become his daily sustenance, as they had long been mine. But the will of God was done. I have sometimes thought that had his life been spared, being made brothers by a stricter tie than ever in the bonds of the same faith, hope, and love, we should have been happier in each other than it was in the power of mere natural affection to make us. But it was his blessing to be taken from a world in which he had no longer any wish to continue, and it will be mine, if, while I dwell in it, my time may not be altogether wasted. In order to effect that good end, I wrote what I am happy to find it has given you pleasure to read. But for that pleasure, madam, you are indebted neither to me, nor to my Muse; but (as you are well aware) to Him who alone can make divine truths palatable, in whatever vehicle conveyed. It is an established philosophical axiom, that nothing can communicate what it has not in itself; but, in the effects of Christian communion, a very strong exception is found to this general rule, however self-evident it may seem. A man himself destitute of all spiritual consolation may, by occasion, impart it to others. Thus I, it seems, who wrote those very poems to amuse a mind oppressed with melancholy, and who have myself derived from them no other benefit (for mere success in authorship will do me no good), have, nevertheless, by so doing, comforted others, at the same time that they administer to me no consolation. But I will proceed no farther in this strain, lest my prose should damp a pleasure that my verse has happily excited. On the contrary, I will endeavor to rejoice in your joy, and especially because I have been myself the instrument of conveying it.

Since the receipt of your obliging letter, I have naturally had recourse to my recollection, to try if it would furnish me with the name that I find at the bottom of it. At the same time I am aware that there is nothing more probable than that my brother might be honored with your friendship without mentioning it to me: for, except a very short period before his death, we lived necessarily at a considerable distance from each other. Ascribe it, madam, not to an impertinent curiosity, but to a desire of better acquaintance with you, if I take the liberty to ask (since ladies' names, at least, are changeable) whether yours was at that time the same as now.

Sincerely wishing you all happiness, and especially that which I am sure you covet most, the happiness which is from above, I remain, dear madam—early as it may seem to say it, Affectionately yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Feb. 14, 1788.

Dear Sir,—Though it be long since I received your last, I have not yet forgotten the impression it made upon me, nor how sensibly I felt myself obliged by your unreserved and friendly communications. I will not apologize for my silence in the interim, because, apprized as you are of my present occupation, the excuse that I might allege will present itself to you of course, and to dilate upon it would therefore be waste of paper.

You are in possession of the best security imaginable for the due improvement of your time, which is a just sense of its value. Had I been, when at your age, as much affected by that important consideration as I am at present, I should not have devoted, as I did, all the earliest parts of my life to amusement only. I am now in the predicament into which the thoughtlessness of youth betrays nine-tenths of mankind, who never discover that the health and good spirits which generally accompany it are, in reality, blessings only according to the use we make of them, till advanced years begin to threaten them with the loss of both. How much wiser would thousands have been than now they ever will be, had a puny constitution, or some occasional infirmity, constrained them to devote those hours to study and reflection, which for want of some such check they had given entirely to dissipation! I, therefore, account you happy, who, young as you are, need not be informed that you cannot always be so, and who already know that the materials upon which age can alone build its comfort should be brought together at an earlier period. You have, indeed, in losing a father, lost a friend, but you have not lost his instructions. His example was not buried with him, but happily for you (happily because you are desirous to avail yourself of it), still lives in your remembrance, and is cherished in your best affections.

Your last letter was dated from the house of a gentleman who was, I believe, my schoolfellow. For the Mr. C——, who lived at Watford, while I had any connexion with Hertfordshire, must have been the father of the present, and, according to his age and the state of his health when I saw him last, must have been long dead. I never was acquainted with the family further than by report, which always spoke honorably of them, though, in all my journeys to and from my father's, I must have passed the door. The circumstance, however, reminds me of the beautiful reflection of Glaucus in the sixth Iliad; beautiful as well for the affecting nature of the observation as for the justness of the comparison and the incomparable simplicity of the expression. I feel that I shall not be satisfied without transcribing it, and yet perhaps *my* Greek may be difficult to decipher.

Οιη περ φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων.
Φυλλα τα μεν τ' ανεμος χαμαδις χεει, αλλα δε θ' υλη
Τηλεθοωσα φυει, εαρος δ' επιγιγνεται ωρη.
Ως ανδρων γενεη, η μεν φυει, η δ' απολησει.*

Excuse this piece of pedantry in a man whose Homer is always before him! What would I give that he were living now, and within my reach! I, of all men living, have the best excuse for indulging such a wish, unreasonable as it may seem; for I have no doubt that the fire of his eye, and the smile of his lips would put me now and then in possession of his full meaning more effectually than any commentator. I return you many thanks for the elegies which you sent me, both which I think deserving of much commendation. I should requite you but ill by sending you my mortuary verses, neither at present can I prevail on myself to do it, having no frank, and being conscious that they are not worth carriage without one. I have one copy left, and that copy I will keep for you. W. C.

The public mind was, at this time, greatly excited by the slave trade—that nefarious system, which was once characterized in the House of Lords, by Bishop Horsley, as "the greatest moral pestilence that ever withered the happiness of mankind." The honor of introducing this momentous question, in which the interest of humanity and justice were so deeply involved, was reserved for William Wilberforce, Esq. How he executed that task, is too well known to require either detail or panegyric. The final abolition of the slave trade was an era in the history of Great Britain, never to be forgotten; and the subsequent legislative enactments for abolishing slavery itself completed what was wanting, in this noble triumph of national benevolence.

The following letter alludes to this interesting subject.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 16, 1788.

I have now three letters of yours, my dearest cousin, before me, all written in the space of a week; and must be indeed insensible of kindness did I not feel yours on this occasion. I cannot describe to you, neither could you comprehend it if I should, the manner in which

* We insert Pope's translation, as being the most familiar to the reader.

"Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies,
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay,
So flourish these, when those have pass'd away."
Pope's Version.

my mind is sometimes impressed with melancholy on particular subjects. Your late silence was such a subject. I heard, saw, and felt, a thousand terrible things, which had no real existence, and was haunted by them night and day, till they at last extorted from me the doleful epistle which I have since wished had been burned before I sent it. But the cloud has passed, and, as far as you are concerned, my heart is once more at rest.

Before you gave me the hint, I had once or twice, as I lay on my bed, watching the break of day, ruminated on the subject which, in your last but one, you recommend to me.

Slavery, or a release from slavery, such as the poor negroes have endured, or perhaps both these topics together, appeared to me a theme so important at the present juncture, and at the same time so susceptible of poetical management, that I more than once perceived myself ready to start in that career, could I have allowed myself to desert Homer for so long a time as it would have cost me to do them justice.

While I was pondering these things, the public prints informed me that Miss More was on the point of publication, having actually finished what I had not yet begun.*

The sight of her advertisement convinced me that my best course would be that to which I felt myself most inclined, to persevere without turning aside to attend to any other call, however alluring, in the business I have in hand.

It occurred to me likewise, that I have already borne my testimony in favor of my black brethren, and that I was one of the earliest, if not the first, of those, who have in the present day expressed their detestation of the diabolical traffic in question.†

On all these accounts I judged it best to be silent, and especially because I cannot doubt that some effectual measure will now be taken to alleviate the miseries of their condition, the whole nation being in possession of the case, and it being impossible also to allege an argument in behalf of man-merchandise that can deserve a hearing. I should be glad to see Hannah More's poem; she is a favorite writer with me, and has more nerve and energy both in her thoughts and language than half the he-rhymers in the kingdom. The "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great" will likewise be most acceptable. I want to learn as much of the world as I can, but to acquire that learning at a distance; and a book with such a title promises fair to serve the purpose effectually.

I recommend it to you, my dear, by all means to embrace the fair occasion, and to put yourself in the way of being squeezed and incommoded a few hours, for the sake of hearing and seeing what you will never have an opportunity to see and hear hereafter, the trial of a man who has been greater and more feared than the great Mogul himself. Whatever we are at home, we have certainly been tyrants in the East, and if these men have, as they are charged, rioted in the miseries of the Innocent, and dealt death to the guiltless, with an unsparing hand, may they receive a retribution that shall in future make all governors and judges of ours, in those distant regions, tremble. While I speak thus, I equally wish them acquitted. They were both my school-fellows, and for Hastings I had a particular value. Farewell.*

W. C.

* For the gratification of those who are not in possession of this poem, we insert the following extract:—

"Where'er to Afric's shores I turn my eyes,
Horrors of deepest, deadliest guilt arise;
I see, by more than Fancy's mirror shown,
The burning village and the blazing town:
See the dire victim torn from social life,
The shrieking babe, the agonizing wife;

. . . . . .

By felon hands, by one relentless stroke,
See the fond links of feeling nature broke!
The fibres twisting round a parent's heart
Torn from their grasp, and bleeding as they part."

We add one more passage, as it contains an animated appeal against the injustice of this nefarious traffic.

"What wrongs, what injuries does Oppression plead.
To smooth the crime, and sanctify the deed?
What strange offence, what aggravated sin?
They stand convicted—of a darker skin!
Barbarians, hold! the opprobrious commerce spare,
Respect His sacred image which they bear.
Though dark and savage, ignorant and blind,
They claim the common privilege of kind;
Let malice strip them of each other plea,
They still are men, and men should still be free."

See Miss More's Poem, entitled *The Slave Trade.*

† With respect to the claim of priority, or who first denounced the injustice and horrors of slavery, we believe the following is a correct historical narrative on this important subject.

The celebrated De Las Casas (born at Seville in 1474, and who accompanied Columbus in his voyage in 1493) was so deeply impressed with the cruelties and oppressions of slavery, that he returned to Europe, and pleaded the cause of humanity before the Emperor Charles V. This prince was so far moved by his representations as to pass royal ordinances to mitigate the evil; but his intentions were unhappily defeated. The Rev. Morgan Godwyn, a Welshman, is the next in order. About the middle of the last century, John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, belonging to the society of Friends, endeavored to rouse the public attention. In 1754, the Society itself took up the cause with so much zeal and success, that there is not at this day a single slave in the possession of any acknowledged Quaker in Pennsylvania. In 1776, Granville Sharp addressed to the British public his "Just Limitation of Slavery," his "Essay on Slavery," and his "Law of Retribution, or a Serious Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies." The poet Shenstone also wrote an elegy on the subject, beginning:—

"See the poor native quit the Lybian shores," &c. &c.

Ramsey and Clarkson bring down the list to the time of Cowper, whose indignant muse in 1782 poured forth his detestation of this traffic in his poem on Charity, an extract of which we shall shortly lay before the reader. The distinguished honor was, however, reserved for Thomas Clarkson, to be the instrument of first engaging the zeal and eloquence of Mr. Wilberforce in the great cause of the abolition of the Slave Trade. The persevering exertions of Mr. Fowell Buxton and those of the Anti-slavery Society achieved the final triumph, and led to the great legislative enactment which abolished slavery itself in the British colonies; and nothing now remains but to associate France, the Brazils, and America, in the noble enterprise of proclaiming the blessings of liberty to five remaining millions of this degraded race.

* The trial of Warren Hastings excited universal interest, from the official rank of the accused, as Governor-

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 22, 1788.

I do not wonder that your ears and feelings were hurt by Mr. Burke's severe invective. But you are to know, my dear, or probably you know it already, that the prosecution of public delinquents has always, and in all countries, been thus conducted. The style of a criminal charge of this kind has been an affair settled among orators from the days of Tully to the present, and, like all other practices that have obtained for ages, this in particular seems to have been founded originally in reason and in the necessity of the case.

He who accuses another to the state must not appear himself unmoved by the view of crimes with which he charges him, lest he should be suspected of fiction, or of precipitancy, or of a consciousness that after all he shall not be able to prove his allegations. On the contrary, in order to impress the minds of his hearers with a persuasion that he himself at least is convinced of the criminality of the prisoner, he must be vehement, energetic, rapid; must call him tyrant, and traitor, and everything else that is odious, and all this to his face, because all this, bad as it is, is no more than he undertakes to prove in the sequel, and if he cannot prove it he must himself appear in a light very little more desirable, and at the best to have trifled with the tribunal to which he has summoned him.

Thus Tully, in the very first sentence of his oration against Catiline, calls him a monster; a manner of address in which he persisted till said monster, unable to support the fury of his accuser's eloquence any longer, rose from his seat, elbowed for himself a passage through the crowd, and at last burst from the senate house in an agony, as if the Furies themselves had followed him.

And now, my dear, though I have thus spoken, and have seemed to plead the cause of that species of eloquence which you, and every creature who has your sentiments, must necessarily dislike, perhaps I am not altogether convinced of its propriety. Perhaps, at the bottom, I am much more of opinion, that if the charge, unaccompanied by any inflammatory matter, and simply detailed, being once delivered into the court, and read aloud, the witnesses were immediately examined, and sentence pronounced according to the evidence, not only the process would be shortened, much time and much expense saved, but justice would have at least as fair play as now she has. Prejudice is of no use in weighing the question, guilty or not guilty, and the principal aim, end, and effect of such introductory harangues is to create as much prejudice as possible. When you and I, therefore, shall have the sole management of such a business entrusted to us, we will order it otherwise.

I was glad to learn from the papers that our cousin Henry shone as he did in reading the charge. This must have given much pleasure to the General.*

Thy ever affectionate W. C.

General of India, the number and magnitude of the articles of impeachment, the splendor of the scene, (which was in Westminster Hall,) and the impassioned eloquence of Mr. Burke, who conducted the prosecution. The proceedings were protracted for nine successive years, when Mr. Hastings was finally acquitted. He is said to have incurred an expense of £30,000 on this occasion, a painful proof of the costly character and delays of British jurisprudence. Some of the highest specimens of eloquence that ever adorned any age or country were delivered during this trial; among which ought to be specified the address of the celebrated Mr. Sheridan, who captivated the attention of the assembly in a speech of three hours and a half, distinguished by all the graces and powers of the most finished oratory. At the close of this speech, Mr. Pitt rose and proposed an adjournment, observing that they were then too much under the influence of the wand of the enchanter to be capable of exercising the functions of a sound and deliberate judgment.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston, March 1, 1788.

My dear Friend,—That my letters may not be exactly an echo to those which I receive, I seldom read a letter immediately before I answer it; trusting to my memory to suggest to me such of its contents as may call for particular notice. Thus I dealt with your last, which lay in my desk, while I was writing to you. But my memory, or rather my recollection failed me, in that instance. I had not forgotten Mr. Bean's letter, nor my obligations to you for the communication of it; but they did not happen to present themselves to me in the proper moment, nor till some hours after my own had been despatched. I now return it, with many thanks for so favorable a specimen of its author. That he is a good man, and a wise man, its testimony proves sufficiently; and I doubt not, that when he shall speak for himself he will be found an agreeable one. For it is possible to be very good, and in many respects very wise; yet at the same time not the most delightful companion. Excuse the shortness of an occasional scratch, which I send in such haste; and believe me, my dear friend, with our united love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, of whose health we hope to hear a more favorable account as the year rises,

Your truly affectionate W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston Lodge, March 3, 1788.‡

My dear Friend,—I had not, as you may

* The poet addressed some complimentary verses on this occasion to Mr. Henry Cowper, beginning thus:—

"Cowper, whose silver voice, tasked sometimes hard," &c.

Henry Cowper, Esq., was reading clerk in the House of Lords.

† Private correspondence.

‡ The date having been probably written on the latter

imagine, read more than two or three lines of the enclosed, before I perceived that I had accidentally come to the possession of another man's property; who, by the same misadventure, has doubtless occupied mine. I accordingly folded it again the moment after having opened it, and now return it. The bells of Olney, both last night and this morning, have announced the arrival of Mr. Bean. I understand that he is now come with his family. It will not be long therefore, before we shall be acquainted. I rather wish than hope that he may find himself comfortably situated; but the parishoners' admiration of Mr. C——, whatever the bells may say, is no good omen. It is hardly to be expected that the same people should admire both.

I have lately been engaged in a correspondence with a lady whom I never saw. She lives at Perten-hall, near Kimbolton, and is the wife of a Dr. King, who has the living. She is evidently a Christian, and a very gracious one. I would that she had you for a correspondent rather than me. One letter from you would do her more good than a ream of mine. But so it is; and since I cannot depute my office to you, and am bound by all sorts of considerations to answer her this evening, I must necessarily quit you that I may have time to do it.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston Lodge, March 3, 1788.

I owe you many acknowledgments, dear madam, for that unreserved communication, both of your history and of your sentiments, with which you favored me in your last. It gives me great pleasure to learn that you are so happily circumstanced, both in respect of situation and frame of mind. With your view of religious subjects, you could not, indeed, speaking properly, be pronounced unhappy in any circumstances; but to have received from above, not only that faith which reconciles the heart to affliction, but many outward comforts also, and especially that greatest of all earthly comforts, a comfortable home, is happiness indeed. May you long enjoy it! As to health or sickness, you have learned already their true value, and know well that the former is no blessing, unless it be sanctified, and that the latter is one of the greatest we can receive, when we are enabled to make a proper use of it.

There is nothing in my story that can possibly be worth your knowledge; yet, lest I should seem to treat you with a reserve which at your hands I have not experienced, such as it is, I will relate it.—I was bred to the law; a profession to which I was never much inclined, and in which I engaged rather because I was desirous to gratify a most indulgent father, than because I had any hope of success in it myself. I spent twelve years in the Temple, where I made no progress in that science, to cultivate which I was sent thither. During this time my father died: not long after him died my mother-in-law: and at the expiration of it a melancholy seized me, which obliged me to quit London, and consequently, to renounce the bar. I lived some time at St. Alban's. After having suffered in that place long and extreme affliction, the storm was suddenly dispelled, and the same day-spring from on high which has arisen upon you, arose on me also. I spent eight years in the enjoyment of it; and have, ever since the expiration of those eight years, been occasionally the prey of the same melancholy as at first. In the depths of it I wrote "The Task," and the volume which preceded it; and in the same deeps I am now translating Homer. But to return to St. Alban's. I abode there a year and half. Thence I went to Cambridge where I spent a short time with my brother, in whose neighborhood I determined, if possible, to pass the remainder of my days. He soon found a lodging for me at Huntingdon. At that place I had not resided long, when I was led to an intimate connexion with a family of the name of Unwin. I soon quitted my lodging and took up my abode with them. I had not lived long under their roof, when Mr. Unwin, as he was riding one Sunday morning to his cure at Gravely, was thrown from his horse; of which fall he died. Mrs. Unwin, having the same views of the gospel as myself, and being desirous of attending a purer ministration of it than was to be found at Huntingdon, removed to Olney, where Mr. Newton was at that time the preacher, and I with her. There we continued till Mr. Newton, whose family was the only one in the place with which we could have a connexion, and with whom we lived always on the most intimate terms, left it. After his departure, finding the situation no longer desirable, and our house threatening to fall upon our heads, we removed hither. Here we have a good house in a most beautiful village, and for the greatest part of the year, a most agreeable neighborhood. Like you, madam, I stay much at home, and have not travelled twenty miles from this place and its environs more than once these twenty years.

All this I have written, not for the singularity of the matter, as you will perceive, but partly for the reason which I gave at the outset, and partly that, seeing we are become correspondents, we may know as much of each other as we can, and that as soon as possible.

I beg, madam, that you will present my

half of this letter, which is torn off, the editor has endeavored to supply it from the following to Mrs. King.

* Private correspondence.

best respects to Mr. King, whom, together with yourself, should you at any time hereafter take wing for a longer flight than usual, we shall be happy to receive at Weston; and believe me, dear madam, his and your obliged and affectionate,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 3, 1789.

One day last week, Mrs. Unwin and I, having taken our morning walk, and returning homeward through the Wilderness, met the Throckmortons. A minute after we had met, them, we heard the cry of hounds at no great distance, and, mounting the broad stump of an elm, which had been felled, and by the aid of which we were enabled to look over the wall, we saw them. They were all at that time in our orchard: presently we heard a terrier, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton, which you may remember by the name of Fury, yelping with much vehemence and saw her running through the thickets within a few yards of us at her utmost speed, as if in pursuit of something which we doubted not was the fox. Before we could reach the other end of the Wilderness, the hounds entered also; and when we arrived at the gate which opens into the grove, there we found the whole weary cavalcade assembled. The huntsman, dismounting, begged leave to follow his hounds on foot, for he was sure, he said, that they had killed him—a conclusion which I suppose he drew from their profound silence. He was accordingly admitted, and, with a sagacity that would not have dishonored the best hound in the world, pursuing precisely the same track which the fox and the dogs had taken, though he had never had a glimpse at either after their first entrance through the rails, arrived where he found the slaughtered prey. He soon produced dead reynard, and rejoined us in the grove with all his dogs about him. Having an opportunity to see a ceremony, which I was pretty sure would never fall in my way again, I determined to stay, and to notice all that passed with the most minute attention. The huntsman, having, by the aid of a pitchfork, lodged reynard on the arm of an elm, at the height of about nine feet from the ground, there left him for a considerable time. The gentlemen sat on their horses contemplating the fox, for which they had toiled so hard; and the hounds, assembled at the foot of the tree, with faces not less expressive of the most rational delight, contemplated the same object. The huntsman remounted; cut off a foot, and threw it to the hounds—one of them swallowed it whole like a bolus. He then once more, alighted, and, drawing down the fox by the hinder legs, desired the people, who by this time were rather numerous, to open a lane for him to the right and left. He was instantly obeyed, when, throwing the fox to the distance of some yards, and screaming like a fiend, "tear him to pieces," at least six times repeatedly, he consigned him over absolutely to the pack, who in a few minutes devoured him completely. Thus, my dear, as Virgil says, what none of the gods could have ventured to promise me, time itself, pursuing its accustomed course, has of its own accord presented me with. I have been in at the death of a fox, and you now know as much of the matter as I, who am as well informed as any sportsman in England.

Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 12, 1788.

Slavery, and the Manners of the Great, I have read. The former I admired, as I do all that Miss More writes, as well for energy of expression, as for the tendency of the design. I have never yet seen any production of her pen that has not recommended itself by both these qualifications. There is likewise much good sense in her manner of treating every subject, and no mere poetic cant (which is the thing that I abhor) in her manner of treating any. And this I say, not because you now know and visit her, but it has long been my avowed opinion of her works, which I have both spoken and written, as often as I have had occasion to mention them.*

Mr. Wilberforce's little book (if he was the author of it) has also charmed me. It must, I should imagine, engage the notice of those to whom it is addressed. In that case one may say to them, either answer it or be set down by it. They will do neither. They will approve, commend and forget it. Such has been the fate of all exhortations to reform, whether in prose or verse, and however closely pressed upon the conscience, in all ages: here and there a happy individual, to whom God gives grace and wisdom to profit by the admonition, is the better for it. But the aggregate body (as Gilbert Cooper used to call the multitude) remain, though with a very good understanding of the matter, like horse and mule who have none.

* We here beg particularly to recommend the perusal of the Memoirs of Mrs. Hannah More. They are replete with peculiar interest, not only in detailing the history of her own life, and the incidents connected with her numerous and valuable productions, but as elucidating the character of the times in which she lived, and exhibiting a lively portrait of the distinguished literary persons with whom she associated. The Blue Stocking Club, or "Bas bleu," is minutely described—we are present at its coteries, introduced to its personages, and familiar with its manners and habits. The Montagus, the Boscawens, the Veseys, the Carters, and the Pepysses, all pass in review before us; and prove how conversation might be made subservient to the improvement of the intellect, and the enlargement of the heart, if both were cultivated to answer these exalted ends.

We shall now soon lose our neighbors at the Hall. We shall truly miss them and long for their return. Mr. Throckmorton said to me last night, with sparkling eyes, and a face expressive of the highest pleasure—"We compared you this morning with Pope; we read your fourth Iliad and his, and I verily think we shall beat him. He has many superfluous lines, and does not interest one. When I read your translation, I am deeply affected. I see plainly your advantage, and am convinced that Pope spoiled all by attempting the work in rhyme." His brother George, who is my most active amanuensis, and who indeed first introduced the subject, seconded all he said. More would have passed, but, Mrs. Throckmorton having seated herself at the harpsichord, and for my amusement merely, my attention was of course turned to her. The new vicar of Olney is arrived, and we have exchanged visits. He is a plain, sensible man, and pleases me much. A treasure for Olney, if Olney can understand his value.

W. C.

The public mind, inflamed by details of the most revolting atrocities, which characterised the Slave-Trade, became daily more agitated on this important subject, and impressed with a sense of its cruelty and injustice. To strengthen the ardor of these generous feelings, the relatives of Cowper solicited the co-operation of his pen, which was already known to have employed its powers in the vindication of oppressed Africa.* General Cowper, among others, suggested that the composition of songs or ballads written in the simplicity peculiar to that style of poetry, and adapted to popular airs, might perhaps be the most efficient mode of promoting the interests of the cause. The poet lost no time in complying with this solicitation, and composed three ballads, one of which he transmitted to the General, with the following letter.

TO GENERAL COWPER.

Weston, 1788.

My dear General,—A letter is not pleasant which excites curiosity, but does not gratify it. Such a letter was my last, the defects of which I therefore take the first opportunity to supply. When the condition of our negroes in the islands was first presented to me as a subject for songs, I felt myself not at all allured to the undertaking: it seemed to offer only images of horror, which could by no means be accommodated to the style of that sort of composition. But having a desire to comply, if possible, with the request made to me, after turning the matter in my mind as many ways as I could, I at last, as I told you, produced three, and that which appears to myself the best of those three I have sent you. Of the other two, one is serious, in a strain of thought perhaps rather too serious, and I could not help it. The other, of which the slave-trader is himself the subject, is somewhat ludicrous. If I could think them worth your seeing, I would, as opportunity should occur, send them also. If this amuses you I shall be glad. W. C.

* See Poem on Charity.

THE MORNING DREAM, A BALLAD.

*To the tune of "Tweed Side."**

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that on ocean afloat,
Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
And the fresh blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impressed me with awe,
Ne'er taught me by woman before:
She sat, and a shield at her side
Shed light like a sun on the waves,
And smiling divinely, she cried—
"I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then, raising her voice to a strain,
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain
Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds which had over us hung
Fled, chas'd by her melody clear,
And methought, while she liberty sung,
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy, stood,
Oppression his terrible name:
In his hand, as a sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey,
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as, approaching the land,
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And, the moment the monster expir'd,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspir'd.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide,
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which serv'd my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves,
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

* These verses were set to a popular tune, for the purpose of general circulation, and to aid the efforts then making for the abolition of the slave-trade.

Few subjects have agitated this country more deeply than the important question of the abolition of the Slave-Trade; if we except, what was its final and necessary consequence, the extinction of Slavery itself. The wrongs of injured Africa seemed at length to have come up in remembrance before God, and the days of mourning to be approaching to their end. The strife of polities and the passions of contending parties gave way to the great cause of humanity, and a Pitt and a Fox, supported by many of their respective adherents, here met on common and neutral ground. The walls of parliament re-echoed with the tones of an eloquence the most sublime and impassioned, because it is the generous emotions of the heart that invigorate the intellect, and give to it a persuasive and commanding power. In the meantime the mammon of unrighteousness was not inactive; commercial cupidity and self-interest raised up a severe and determined resistance, which protracted the final settlement of this question for nearly twenty years. But its doom was sealed. The moral feeling of the country pronounced the solemn verdict of condemnation, long before the decision of Parliament confirmed that verdict by the authority and sanction of law. William Wilberforce, Esq., the great champion of this cause, who had pleaded its rights with an eloquence that had never been surpassed, and a perseverance and ardor that no opposition could subdue, lived to see the traffic in slaves declared illegal by a legislative enactment; his own country rescued from an injurious imputation; and himself distinguished by the honorable and nobly earned title of *The Liberator of Africa*.*

We have already stated that Cowper was urged to contribute some popular ballads in behalf of this benevolent enterprise, and that he composed three, one of which is inserted in the previous page. We now insert another production of the same kind, which we think possesses more pathos and spirit than the former.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there One who reigns on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers—wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
Crossing in your barks the main;
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart;
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart:

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger,
Than the color of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

See *Poems.*

To the Christian and philosophic mind, which is accustomed to trace the origin and operation of principles that powerfully affect the moral dignity and happiness of nations, it is interesting to enquire what is the rise of that high moral feeling, that keen and indignant sense of wrong and oppression, which form so distinguishing a feature in the character of this country? Why, too, when the crime and guilt of slavery attached to France, to Portugal, to Spain, to Holland, and above all to America, not less justly than to ourselves, was Great Britain the first to lead the way in this noble career of humanity, and to sacrifice sordid interest to the claims of public duty?

This inquiry is by no means irrelevant, because the same question suggested itself to the mind of Cowper, and he thus answers it—

The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.

* The slave trade was abolished in the year 1807; declared to be felony, in 1811; and to be piracy, in 1824.

They take perhaps a well-directed aim,
Who seek it *in his climate and his frame.*
Liberal in all things else, yet nature here
With stern severity deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers;
Unwelcome vapors quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams;
The peasants urge their harvest ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work;
Thus with a rigor, for his good designed,
She rears her favorite man of all mankind.
His form robust and of elastic tone,
Proportioned well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well-lodged and masculine of course.
Hence liberty, sweet liberty inspires,
*And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.**
Table Talk.

The foundation of this high national feeling must evidently be sought in the causes here specified. To these may be added the influence arising from the constitution of our government, the character of our institutions, and the freedom with which every subject undergoes the severe ordeal of public discussion.

May it always be so wisely directed, as never to incur the risk of becoming the foaming and heedless torrent; but rather resemble the majestic river, so beautifully described by the poet Denham:

"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."
Cooper's Hill.

It is due, however, to the venerable name of Granville Sharp, to record, more particularly, the zeal with which he called forth and fostered these feelings, and devoted his time, his talents, and his labors, in exposing the cruelty and injustice of this nefarious traffic. He brought it to the test of Scripture. He refuted those arguments which pretended to justify the practice from the supposed authority of the Mosaic law, by proving that the servitude there mentioned was a limited service, and accompanied by the year of release* and jubilee. He cited passages from that law, expressly prohibiting and condemning it. "*Thou shalt not oppress a stranger*, for ye know the heart of a *stranger*, seeing ye were *strangers* in the land of Egypt." Exod. xxiii. 9. "If a *stranger* sojourn with thee, in your land, ye shall not vex the stranger," &c. &c. "*Thou shalt love him as thyself.*" Lev. xix. 33. "Love ye therefore the *stranger*, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Deut. x. 17—19. He showed at large that slavery was directly opposed to the genius and spirit of the Gospel, which connects all mankind in the bonds of fellowship and love. He adduced the beautiful and affecting remark of St. Paul, who, in his address to Philemon, when he beseeches him to take back his servant Onesimus, observes, and yet "*not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.*" Ver. 16.

After urging various other arguments, and insisting largely, in his "Law of Retribution," on the extent and enormity of the national sin, and its fearful consequences, he draws an affecting picture of the desolation of Africa, quoting the following words of his illustrious ancestor, Archbishop Sharp:—"*That Africa*, which is now more fruitful of monsters, than it was once of excellently wise and learned men; *that Africa*, which formerly afforded us our *Clemens*, our *Origen*, our *Tertullian*, our *Cyprian*, our *Augustine*, and many other extraordinary lights in the church of God: that *famous Africa*, in whose soil *Christianity* did thrive so prodigiously, and which could boast of so many flourishing churches, alas! *is now a wilderness.* 'The wild boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it,' 'and it bringeth forth nothing but briars and thorns.'"

Such were the appeals of Granville Sharp to the generation that is now swept away by the rapid current of time. The grave has entombed their prejudices. The great judgment day will pronounce the final verdict. It is a melancholy proof of the slow progress of truth, and of the influence of prejudice and error, that De Las Casas pleaded the injustice of slavery, before the Emperor Charles V., nearly three hundred years from the present time; and that it required this long and protracted period before the cause of humanity finally triumphed; and even then, the triumph was restricted to the precincts of one single kingdom. That kingdom is Great Britain! Five millions are said to be still

* The following lines from Goldsmith's "Traveller," have always been justly admired, and are so much in unison with the verses of Cowper, quoted above, that we feel persuaded we shall consult the taste of the reader by inserting them.

"Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide!
There all around the gentlest breezes stray,
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,
Extremes are only in the master's mind.
Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great.
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye;
I see the lords of human kind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashioned, fresh from Nature's hand;
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control;
While e'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man."

The celebrated Dr. Johnson once quoted these lines, with so much personal feeling and interest, that the tears are said to have started into his eyes.—See *Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

* "In the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty." Deut. xv. 12, 13

reserved in bondage and oppression.* May this foul stain be speedily effaced, and civilized nations learn, that they can never found a title to true greatness till the rights of humanity and justice are publicly recognized and respected!

We could have dwelt with delight on the zeal of Ramsay and Clarkson, but our limits do not allow further digression, and the name of Cowper demands and merits our attention.

How much the cause is indebted to his zeal and benevolence, may be collected from the following extracts.

Canst thou, and honored with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame;
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold:
So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside;
Not he, but his emergence forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.

Charity.

The verses which we next insert unite the inspiration of poetry with the manly feelings of the Englishman, and the ardor of genuine humanity.

I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.†

That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that, where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

The Task—The Timepiece.

But, highly as we appreciate the manly spirit of the Englishman, and the ardor of the philanthropist, in the foregoing verses, it is the *missionary feeling*, glowing in the following passage, that we most admire, as expressing the only true mode of requiting injured Africa. Let us not think that we have discharged the debt by an act of emancipation.* In conferring the boon of liberty, we restore only that of which they ought never to have been deprived. Restitution is not compensation. We have granted compensation to the proprietor, but where is the compensation to the negro? Never will the accumulated wrongs of ages be redressed, till we say to the sable sons of Africa, *Behold your God!* We have burst the chains from the body, let us now convey to them the tidings of a nobler freedom, a deliverance from a worse captivity than even African bondage and oppression. Let us announce to them that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth." Acts xvii. 26. Let their minds be expanded by instruction, and the Bible, that great charter of salvation, be circulated wherever it can be read, and thus Britain may acquire a lasting and an honorable title to their gratitude and love.

Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,
And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.

* It is computed that there are two millions of slaves belonging to the United States of America; a similar number in the Brazils; and that the remainder are under the control of other governments.

† The force and beauty of this passage will be best understood by the following statement. A slave, of the name of Somerset was brought over to England from the West Indies, by his master, Mr. Stewart. Shortly after, he absented himself, and refused to return. He was pursued and arrested, and by Mr. Stewart's orders forcibly put on board a ship, the captain of which was called Knowles. He was there detained in custody, to be carried out of the kingdom and sold. The case being made known was brought before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, in the Court of King's Bench, June 22, 1772. The judgment of Lord Mansfield, on this occasion was as follows:—"A foreigner cannot be imprisoned *here*, on the authority of any law existing in his own country. The power of a master over his servant is different in all countries, more or less limited or extensive; the exercise of it therefore must always be regulated by the laws of the place where exercised. The power claimed by this return was never in use *here*. No master ever was allowed *here* to take a slave by force, to be sold abroad, because he had deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatever. We cannot say the cause set forth by this return is allowed or approved of *by the laws of this kingdom, and therefore the man must be discharged.*" "*In other words,*" says a report of the case, "*a negro slave, coming from the colonies into Great Britain, becomes ipso facto Free.*"

* With what feelings of deep gratitude ought we to record the final emancipation of eight hundred thousand Negroes, in the West India Colonies, by an act which passed the British legislature, in the year 1834, dating the commencement of that memorable event from the first of August. The sum of twenty millions was voted to the proprietors of slaves, as a compensation for any loss they might incur. Mr. Wilberforce was at this time on his dying bed, as if his life had been protracted to witness this noble consummation of all his labors. When he heard of this splendid act of national generosity, he lifted up his feeble hands to heaven, exclaiming, "*Thank God, that I have lived to see my country give twenty millions to abolish slavery.*"

The noble grant of the British and Foreign Bible Society (to commemorate this great event) of a copy of a New Testament and Psalter to every emancipated negro that was able to read, deserves to be recorded on this occasion. The measure originated in a suggestion of the Rev. Hugh Stowell. It was computed that, out of a population of eight hundred thousand negroes, one hundred and fifty thousand were capable of reading, and that an expenditure of twenty thousand pounds would be necessary to supply this demand. *Forty tons cubic measure of New Testaments were destined to Jamaica alone.* The Colonial department was willing to assist in the transfer, but the Government packets were found to be too small for this purpose. It is greatly to the honor of some ship-owners, distinguished for their benevolence and public spirit, in the city of London, that they offered to convey this valuable deposit, free of freightage and expense, to its place of destination. The sum of fifteen thousand pounds was eventually contributed.

Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While gratitude and love made service sweet—
"My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged, and ignorance made fast the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun and what pursue;
Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
Serving a benefactor, I am free,
At my best home, if not exiled from thee."
Charity.

That Ethiopia shall one day stretch out her hands unto God we have the assurance of a specific prophecy, as well as the general declarations of sacred scripture. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." At what time or in what manner the prophecy will be accomplished, it is not for us to determine. But should it please divine providence that the light of the gospel, through the instrumentality of Britain, should first spring forth from among that people in our own West India colonies, the land of their former servitude and oppression; should they subsequently, with bowels yearning for their own country, see fit to return, seized with a desire to communicate to the land of their nativity that gospel, the power of which they have previously felt for themselves; and should the hitherto inaccessible and unexplored parts of that vast continent thus become evangelised, such an event will furnish one of the most remarkable instances of an over-ruling Power, educing good out of positive evil, ever recorded in the annals of mankind.

We beg to add one more remark. The blacks are considered to be the descendants of Ham, who first peopled Africa. It pleased God to pronounce an awful curse on him and his posterity. "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be." For the long period of four thousand years has that curse impended over their heads. They have drunk the cup of bitterness to its lowest dregs. We conceive this terrible interdict to be now approaching to its termination. The curse began to be repealed, *in part*, when the abolition of slavery was first proclaimed by a British parliament. This was the seed-time of the future harvest: the example of Britain cannot be exhibited in vain: other nations must follow that example, or suffer the consequences of their neglect. They must concede the liberty which is the great inherent right of all mankind, or expect to behold it wrested from them amidst scenes of carnage and blood. Policy, justice, and humanity, therefore, require the concession. We have said that the repeal of the curse had begun in part; it will be completed when civil privileges shall be considered to be only the precursors of that more glorious liberty flowing from the communication of the gospel of peace. Then will Africa be raised up from her state of moral degradation, and be elevated to the rank and order of civilized nations. Then will she once more boast of her Cyprians, her Tertullians, and her Augustines; and the voice of the Lord, speaking from his high and holy place, will proclaim to her sable and afflicted sons, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee." "*There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*" Col. iii. 11.

How sweetly does the muse of Cowper proclaim the blessings of this spiritual liberty!

But there is yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unprais'd,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs
Of earth and hell confed'rate take away:
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppressions, prisons, have no power to bind:
Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.
'Tis liberty of heart deriv'd from heav'n,
Bought with His blood, who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp, that speaks them his.
They are august; but this transcends them all.

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confed'rate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps, compar'd
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scen'ry all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His t'enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd,
Can lift to heav'n an unpresumptuous eye
And smiling say—"My Father made them all!"
Winter Morning Walk.

The interesting nature of the subject, and its popularity at the present moment, must plead our excuse for these lengthened remarks and extracts. But we were anxious to prove how much this great cause of humanity was indebted, in the earlier stages of its progress, to the powerful appeals and representations of Cowper.

We now resume the correspondence.

TO MRS. HILL.*

Weston Lodge, March 17, 1788.

My dear Madam—A thousand thanks to you for your obliging and most acceptable present, which I received safe this evening.

* Private correspondence.

Had you known my occasions, you could not possibly have timed it more exactly. The Throckmorton family, who live in our neighborhood, and who sometimes take a dinner with us, were, by engagement made with them two or three days ago, appointed to dine with us just at the time when your turkey will be in perfection. A turkey from Wargrave, the residence of my friend, and a turkey, as I conclude, of your breeding, stands a fair chance, in my account, to excel all other turkeys; and the ham, its companion, will be no less welcome.

I shall be happy to hear that my friend Joseph has recovered entirely from his late indisposition, which I was informed was gout; a distemper which, however painful in itself, brings at least some comfort with it, both for the patient and those who love him, the hope of length of days, and an exemption from numerous other evils. I wish him just so much of it as may serve for a confirmation of this hope, and not one twinge more.

Your husband, my dear madam, told me, some time since, that a certain library of mine, concerning which I have heard no other tidings these five-and-twenty years, is still in being.* Hue and cry have been made after it in Old Palace-yard, but hitherto in vain. If he can inform a bookless student in what region, or in what nook, his long-lost volumes may be found, he will render me an important service.

I am likely to be furnished soon with shelves, which my cousin of New Norfolk-street is about to send me; but furniture for these shelves I shall not presently procure, unless by recovering my stray authors. I am not young enough to think of making a new collection, and shall probably possess myself of few books hereafter but such as I may put forth myself, which cost me nothing but what I can better spare than money—time and consideration.

I beg, my dear madam, that you will give my love to my friend, and believe me, with the warmest sense of his and your kindness,

Your most obliged and affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston Lodge, March 17, 1788.

My dear Friend,—The evening is almost worn away while I have been writing a letter, to which I was obliged to give immediate attention. An application from a lady, and backed by you, could not be less than irresistible. The lady, too, a daughter of Mr. Thornton's.‡ Neither are these words of course: since I returned to Homer in good earnest, I turn out of my way for no consideration that I can possibly put aside.

With modern tunes I am unacquainted, and have therefore accommodated my verse to an old one; not so old, however, but that there will be songsters found old enough to remember it. The song is an admirable one for which it was made, and, though political, nearly, if not quite, as serious as mine. On such a subject as I had before me, it seems impossible not to be serious. I shall be happy if it meet with your and Lady Balgonie's approbation.

Of Mr. Bean I could say much; but have only time at present to say that I esteem and love him. On some future occasion I shall speak of him more at large.

We rejoice that Mrs. Newton is better, and wish nothing more than her complete recovery. Dr. Ford is to be pitied.* His wife, I suppose, is going to heaven; a journey which she can better afford to take than he to part with her.

I am, my dear friend, with our united love to you all three, most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

March 19, 1788.

My dear Friend,—The spring is come, but not, I suppose, that spring which our poets have celebrated. So I judge at least by the extreme severity of the season, sunless skies, and freezing blasts, surpassing all that we experienced in the depth of winter. How do you dispose of yourself in this howling month of March? As for me, I walk daily, be the weather what it may, take bark, and write verses. By the aid of such means as these I combat the north-east wind with some measure of success, and look forward, with the hope of enjoying it, to the warmth of summer.

Have you seen a little volume, lately published, entitled, "The Manners of the Great?" It is said to have been written by Mr. Wilberforce, but whether actually written by him or not, is undoubtedly the work of some man intimately acquainted with the subject, a gentleman, and a man of letters.† If it makes the impression on those to whom it is addressed, that may be in some degree expected from his arguments, and from his manner of pressing them, it will be well. But you and I have lived long enough in the world to know that the hope of a general reformation in any class of men whatever, or of women either, may easily be too sanguine.

I have now given the last revisal to as

* Cowper's books had been lost, owing to his original illness, and his sudden removal to St. Alban's.

† Private correspondence.

‡ Lady Balgonie.

* Dr. Ford was Vicar of Melton Mowbray, well known and respected, and a particular friend of Mr. Newton's.

† The author of this work proved to be Miss Hannah More.

much of my translation as was ready for it, and do not know that I shall bestow another single stroke of my pen on that part of it before I send it to the press. My business at present is with the sixteenth book, in which I have made some progress, but have not yet actually sent forth Patroclus to the battle. My first translation lies always before me; line by line I examine it as I proceed, and line by line reject it. I do not, however, hold myself altogether indebted to my critics for the better judgment that I seem to exercise in this matter now than in the first instance. By long study of him, I am in fact become much more familiar with Homer than at any time heretofore, and have possessed myself of such a taste of his manner, as is not to be attained by mere cursory reading for amusement. But, alas! 'tis after all a mortifying consideration that the majority of my judges hereafter, will be no judges of this. *Græcum est, non potest legi*, is a motto that would suit nine in ten of those who will give themselves airs about it, and pretend to like or to dislike. No matter. I know I shall please *you*, because I know *what* pleases you, and I am sure that I have done it.

Adieu! my good friend,
Ever affectionately yours, W. C.

Cowper alludes in the following letters, to the progress of his version, and the obstructions to the negro cause.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.,

Weston, March 29, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I rejoice that you have so successfully performed so long a journey without the aid of hoofs or wheels. I do not know that a journey on foot exposes a man to more disasters than a carriage or a horse; perhaps it may be the safer way of travelling, but the novelty of it impressed me with some anxiety on your account.

It seems almost incredible to myself that my company should be at all desirable to you, or to any man. I know so little of the world as it goes at present, and labor generally under such a depression of spirits, especially at those times when I could wish to be most cheerful, that my own share in every conversation appears to me to be the most insipid thing imaginable. But you say you found it otherwise, and I will not for my own sake doubt your sincerity: *de gustibus non est disputandum*, and since such is yours, I shall leave you in quiet possession of it, wishing indeed both its continuance and increase. I shall not find a properer place in which to say, accept of Mrs. Unwin's acknowledgements, as well as mine, for the kindness of your expressions on this subject, and be assured of an undissembling welcome at all times, when it shall suit you to give us your company at Weston. As to her, she is one of the sincerest of the human race, and if she receives you with the appearance of pleasure, it is because she feels it. Her behavior on such occasions is with her an affair of conscience, and she dares no more look a falsehood than utter one.

It is almost time to tell you, that I have received the books safe; they have not suffered the least detriment by the way, and I am much obliged to you for them. If my translation should be a little delayed in consequence of this favor of yours, you must take the blame on yourself. It is impossible not to read the notes of a commentator so learned, so judicious, and of so fine a taste as Dr. Clarke,* having him at one's elbow. Though he has been but few hours under my roof, I have already peeped at him, and find that he will be *instar omnium* to me. They are such notes exactly as I wanted. A translator of Homer should ever have somebody at hand to say, "That's a beauty," lest he should slumber where his author does not, not only depreciating, by such inadvertency, the work of his original, but depriving perhaps his own of an embellishment, which wanted only to be noticed.

If you hear ballads sung in the streets on the hardships of the negroes in the islands, they are probably mine.† It must be an honor to any man to have given a stroke to that chain, however feeble. I fear however that the attempt will fail. The tidings which have lately reached me from London concerning it are not the most encouraging. While the matter slept, or was but slightly adverted to, the English only had their share of shame in common with other nations on account of it. But, since it has been canvassed and searched to the bottom, since the public attention has been riveted to the horrible scheme, we can no longer plead either that we did not know it, or did not think of it. Woe be to us if we refuse the poor captives the redress to which they have so clear a right, and prove ourselves in the sight of God and men, indifferent to all considerations but those of gain![‡]

Adieu. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 31, 1788.

My dearest Cousin,—Mrs. Throckmorton

* Well known for his celebrated works, on the "Being and attributes of God," and the "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion."

† They were, after all, never appropriated to that purpose.

‡ The interests of commerce were too much at variance with this great cause of humanity not to oppose a long and persevering resistance to its progress in parliament. Though Mr. Pitt supported the measure, it was not made a government question.

has promised to write to me. I beg that, as often as you shall see her, you will give her a smart pinch, and say, "Have you written to my cousin?" I build all my hopes of her performance on this expedient, and for so doing these my letters, not patent, shall be your sufficient warrant. You are thus to give her the question till she shall answer, "Yes." I have written one more song, and sent it. It is called the "Morning Dream," and may be sung to the tune of Tweed-Side, or any other tune that will suit it, for I am not nice on that subject. I would have copied it for you, had I not almost filled my sheet without it; but now, my dear, you must stay till the sweet sirens of London shall bring it to you, or, if that happy day should never arrive, I hereby acknowledge myself your debtor to that amount. I shall now probably cease to sing of tortured negroes, a theme which never pleased me, but which, in the hope of doing them some little service, I was not unwilling to handle.

If anything could have raised Miss More to a higher place in my opinion than she possessed before, it could only be your information that, after all, she, and not Mr. Wilberforce, is author of that volume. How comes it to pass, that she, being a woman, writes with a force and energy, and a correctness hitherto arrogated by the men, and not very frequently displayed even by the men themselves?

Adieu, W. C.

The object of this valuable treatise is not to attack gross delinquencies, but to show the danger of resting for acceptance on mere outward decorum and general respectability of character, while the internal principle, which can alone elevate the affections of the heart and influence the life, is wanting. We select the following passage as powerfully illustrating this view. Speaking of the rich man, who is represented by our Lord as lifting up his eyes in torments, Miss More observes, "He committed no enormities, that have been transmitted to us: for that he dined well and dressed well could hardly incur the bitter penalty of eternal misery. That his expenses were suitable to his station, and his splendor proportioned to his opulence, does not exhibit any objection to his character. Nor are we told that he refused the crumbs which Lazarus solicited: and yet this man, on an authority we are not permitted to question, is represented in a future state as *lifting up his eyes, being in torments.* His punishment seems to have been the consequence of an irreligious, a worldly spirit; a heart corrupted by the softnesses and delights of life. It was not because he was rich, but *because he trusted in riches;* or, if even he was charitable, *his charity wanted that principle which alone could sanctify it. His views terminated here; this world's good, and this world's applause, were the motives and the end of his actions. He forgot God; he was destitute of piety; and the absence of this great and first principle of human actions rendered his shining deeds, however they might be admired among men, of no value in the sight of God.*"

Admonitory statements like these are invaluable, and demand the earnest attention of those to whom they apply.

Nor is the next passage less important on the subject of sins of omission.

"It is not less against *negative* than against *actual evil*, that affectionate exhortation, lively remonstrance, and pointed parable are exhausted. It is against the tree which bore *no* fruit, the lamp which had *no* oil, the unprofitable servant who made *no* use of his talent, that the severe sentence is denounced, as well as against *corrupt* fruit, *bad* oil, and talents *ill* employed. *We are led to believe, from the same high authority, that omitted duties and neglected opportunities will furnish no inconsiderable portion of our future condemnation.* A very awful part of the decision, in the great day of account, seems to be reserved merely for carelessness, omissions, and negatives. Ye gave me *no* meat, ye gave me *no* drink; ye took me *not* in, ye visited me *not.* On the punishment attending positive crimes, as being more naturally obvious, it was not, perhaps, thought so necessary to insist."*

This work was the first important appeal, in those days, addressed to the fashionable world, and Miss More's previous intercourse with it admirably qualified her to write with judgment and effect.

TO MRS. KING.†

Weston Lodge, April 11, 1788.

Dear Madam,—The melancholy that I have mentioned, and concerning which you are so kind as to inquire, is of a kind, so far as I know, peculiar to myself. It does not at all affect the operations of my mind on any subject to which I can attach it, whether serious or ludicrous, or whatsoever it may be; for which reason I am almost always employed either in reading or writing when I am not engaged in conversation. A vacant hour is my abhorrence, because when I am not occupied I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament. I thank you for the recommendation of a medicine from which you have received benefit yourself; but there is hardly anything that I have not proved, however beneficial it may have been found by others, in my own case utterly useless. I

* Thoughts on the Manners of the Great.

† Private correspondence.

have, therefore, long since bid adieu to all hope from human means,—the means excepted of perpetual employment.

I will not say that we shall never meet, because it is not for a creature who knows not what shall be to-morrow to assert anything positively concerning the future. Things more unlikely I have yet seen brought to pass, and things which, if I had expressed myself of them at all, I should have said were impossible. But, being respectively circumstanced as we are, there seems no present probability of it. You speak of insuperable hindrances; and I also have hindrances that would be equally difficult to surmount. One is, that I never ride, that I am not able to perform a journey on foot, and that chaises do not roll within the sphere of that economy which my circumstances oblige me to observe. If this were not of itself sufficient to excuse me, when I decline so obliging an invitation as yours, I could mention yet other obstacles. But to what end? One impracticability makes as effectual a barrier as a thousand. It will be otherwise in other worlds. Either we shall not bear about us a body, or it will be more easily transportable than this. In the meantime, by the help of the post, strangers to each other may cease to be such, as you and I have already begun to experience.

It is indeed, madam, as you say, a foolish world, and likely to continue such till the Great Teacher shall himself vouchsafe to make it wiser. I am persuaded that time alone will never mend it. But there is doubtless a day appointed when there shall be a more general manifestation of the beauty of holiness than mankind have ever yet beheld. When that period shall arrive there will be an end of profane representations, whether of heaven or hell, on the stage:—the great realities will supercede them.

I have just discovered that I have written to you on paper so transparent that it will hardly keep the contents a secret. Excuse the mistake, and believe me, dear madam, with my respects to Mr. King,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

The slow progress of the abolition cause, and the nature of the difficulties, are adverted to in the following letter.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, April 19, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for your last, and for the verses in particular therein contained, in which there is not only rhyme but reason. And yet I fear that neither you nor I, with all our reasoning and rhyming, shall effect much good in this matter. So far as I can learn, and I have had intelligence from a quarter within the reach of such as is respectable, our governors are not animated altogether with such heroic ardor as the occasion might inspire. They consult frequently indeed in the cabinet about it, but the frequency of their consultations in a case so plain as this would be, did not what Shakspeare calls commodity, and what we call political expediency, cast a cloud over it, rather bespeaks a desire to save appearances than to interpose to purpose. Laws will, I suppose, be enacted for the more humane treatment of the negroes; but who shall see to the execution of them? The planters will not, and the negroes cannot. In fact, we know that laws of this tendency have not been wanting, enacted even amongst themselves, but there has been always a want of prosecutors, or righteous judges; deficiencies which will not be very easily supplied. The newspapers have lately told us that these merciful masters have, on this occasion, been occupied in passing ordinances, by which the lives and limbs of their slaves are to be secured from wanton cruelty hereafter. But who does not immediately detect the artifice, or can give them a moment's credit for anything more than a design, by this show of lenity, to avert the storm which they think hangs over them? On the whole, I fear there is reason to wish, for the honor of England, that the nuisance had never been troubled, lest we eventually make ourselves justly chargeable with the whole offence by not removing it. The enormity cannot be palliated; we can no longer plead that we were not aware of it, or that our attention was otherwise engaged, and shall be inexcusable therefore ourselves if we leave the least part of it unredressed. Such arguments as Pharaoh might have used to justify the destruction of the Israelites, substituting only sugar for bricks, may lie ready for our use also; but I think we can find no better.

We are tolerably well, and shall rejoice to hear that, as the year rises, Mrs. Newton's health keeps pace with it. Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately and truly yours,

W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 6, 1788.

My dearest Cousin,—You ask me how I like Smollett's Don Quixote? I answer, well; perhaps better than anybody's; but, having no skill in the original, some diffidence becomes me: that is to say, I do not know whether I *ought* to prefer it or not. Yet, there is so little deviation from other versions which I have seen that I do not much hesi-

fate. It has made me laugh I know immoderately, and in such a case *ça suffit*.

A thousand thanks, my dear, for the new convenience in the way of stowage which you are so kind as to intend me. There is nothing in which I am so deficient as repositories for letters, papers, and litter of all sorts. Your last present has helped me somewhat, but not with respect to such things as require lock and key, which are numerous. A box, therefore, so secured, will be to me an invaluable acquisition. And, since you leave me to my option, what shall be the size thereof, I of course prefer a folio. On the back of the book-seeming box, some artist expert in those matters, may inscribe these words,

Collectanea curiosa,

the English of which is, a collection of curiosities. A title which I prefer to all others, because if I live, I shall take care that the box shall merit it, and because it will operate as an incentive to open that which being locked cannot be opened: for in these cases the greater the baulk the more wit is discovered by the ingenious contriver of it, viz., myself.

The General, I understand by his last letter, is in town. In my last to him I told him news, possibly it will give you pleasure, and ought for that reason to be made known to you as soon as possible. My friend Rowley, who I told you has, after twenty-five years' silence, renewed his correspondence with me, and who now lives in Ireland, where he has many and considerable connexions, has sent to me for thirty subscription papers.* Rowley is one of the most benevolent and friendly creatures in the world, and will, I dare say, do all in his power to serve me.

I am just recovered from a violent cold, attended by a cough, which split my head while it lasted. I escaped these tortures all the winter, but whose constitution, or what skin, can possibly be proof against our vernal breezes in England? Mine never were, nor will be.

When people are intimate, we say they are as great as two inkle-weavers, on which expression I have to remark, in the first place, that the word *great* is here used in a sense which the corresponding term has not, so far as I know, in any other language, and secondly, that inkle-weavers contract intimacies with each other sooner than other people on account of their juxtaposition in weaving of inkle. Hence it is that Mr. Gregson and I emulate those happy weavers in the closeness of our connexion.† We live near to each other, and while the Hall is empty are each other's only extraforaneous comfort.

Most truly thine, W. C.

* For his version of Homer.
† Mr. Gregson was chaplain to Mr. Throckmorton.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, May 8, 1788.

Alas! my library—I must now give it up for a lost thing forever. The only consolation belonging to the circumstance is, or seems to be, that no such loss did ever befall any other man, or can ever befall me again. As far as books are concerned I am

Totus teres atque rotundus,

and may set fortune at defiance. The books, which had been my father's, had, most of them, his arms on the inside cover, but the rest no mark, neither his name nor mine. I could mourn for them like Sancho for his Dapple, but it would avail me nothing.

You will oblige me much by sending me "Crazy Kate." A gentleman last winter promised me both her and the "Lace-maker," but he went to London, that place in which, as in the grave, "all things are forgotten," and I have never seen either of them.*

I begin to find some prospect of a conclusion, of the Iliad at least, now opening upon me, having reached the eighteenth book. Your letter found me yesterday in the very fact of dispersing the whole host of Troy, by the voice only of Achilles. There is nothing extravagant in the idea, for you have witnessed a similar effect attending even such a voice as mine, at midnight, from a garret window, on the dogs of a whole parish, whom I have put to flight in a moment.

W. C.

His high sense of the character and qualifications of Lady Hesketh is pleasingly expressed in the following letter, where Mrs. Montagu's coteries in Portman-square are also alluded to.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 12, 1788.

It is probable, my dearest coz., that I shall not be able to write much, but as much as I can I will. The time between rising and breakfast is all that I can at present find, and this morning I lay longer than usual.

In the style of the lady's note to you, I can easily perceive a smatch of her character.† Neither men nor women write with such neatness of expression, who have not given a good deal of attention to language, and qualified themselves by study. At the same time it gave me much more pleasure to observe, that my coz., though not standing on the pinnacle of renown quite so elevated

* He alludes to engravings of these two characters, which had acquired much popularity with the public, especially Crazy Kate, beginning,

"There often wanders one, whom better days," &c. &c.

† Mrs. Montagu.

as that which lifts Mrs. Montagu to the clouds, falls in no degree short of her in this particular; so that, should she make you a member of her academy,* she will do it honor. Suspect me not of flattering you, for I abhor the thought; neither *will* you suspect it. Recollect that it is an invariable rule with me never to pay compliments to those I love.

Two days, *en suite*, I have walked to Gayhurst,† a longer journey than I have walked on foot these seventeen years. The first day I went alone, designing merely to make the experiment, and choosing to be at liberty to return at whatsoever point of my pilgrimage I should find myself fatigued. For I was not without suspicion that years, and some other things no less injurious than years, viz., melancholy and distress of mind, might by this time have unfitted me for such achievements. But I found it otherwise. I reached the church, which stands, as you know, in the garden, in fifty-five minutes, and returned in ditto time to Weston. The next day I took the same walk with Mr. Powley, having a desire to show him the prettiest place in the country.‡ I not only performed these two excursions without injury to my health, but have by means of them gained indisputable proof that my ambulatory faculty is not yet impaired; a discovery which, considering that to my feet alone I am likely, as I have ever been, to be indebted always for my transportation from place to place, I find very delectable.

You will find in the last Gentleman's Magazine a sonnet, addressed to Henry Cowper, signed T. H. I am the writer of it. No creature knows this but yourself; you will make what use of the intelligence you shall see good. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

The Lodge, May 24, 1788.

My dear Friend,—For two excellent prints I return you my sincere acknowledgments. I cannot say that poor Kate resembles much the original, who was neither so young nor so handsome as the pencil has represented her; but she has a figure well suited to the account given of her in "The Task," and has a face exceedingly expressive of despairing melancholy. The Lace-maker is accidentally a good likeness of a young woman, once our neighbor, who was hardly less handsome than the picture twenty years ago; but the loss of one husband, and the acquisition of another, have, since that time, impaired her much; yet she might still be supposed to have sat to the artist.*

We dined yesterday with your friend and mine, the most companionable and domestic Mr. C——.† The whole kingdom can hardly furnish a spectacle more pleasing to a man who has a taste for true happiness, than himself, Mrs. C——, and their multitudinous family. Seven long miles are interposed between us, or perhaps I should oftener have an opportunity of declaiming on this subject.

I am now in the nineteenth book of the Iliad, and on the point of displaying such feats of heroism performed by Achilles as make all other achievements trivial. I may well exclaim, "O for a Muse of fire!" especially having not only a great host to cope with, but a great river also; much, however, may be done when Homer leads the way. I should not have chosen to have been the original author of such a business even though all the Nine had stood at my elbow. Time has wonderful effects. We admire that in an ancient, for which we should send a modern bard to Bedlam.

I saw at Mr. C——'s a great curiosity—an antique bust of Paris, in Parian marble. You will conclude that it interested me exceedingly. I pleased myself with supposing that it once stood in Helen's chamber. It was in fact brought from the Levant, and, though not well mended, (for it had suffered much by time,) is an admirable performance.

W. C.

Mr. Bull had urged Cowper once more to employ the powers of his pen, in what he so eminently excelled, the composition of hymns expressive of resignation to the will of God. It is much to be lamented that he here declines what would so essentially have promoted the interests of true religion.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL‡.

Weston, May 25, 1788.

My dear Friend,—Ask possibilities and they shall be performed; but ask not hymns

* The Blue-stocking Club, or Bas bleu.

The following is the account of the origin of the Blue-stocking Club, extracted from Boswell's "Life of Johnson:" "About this time (1781) it was much the fashion for several ladies to have evening assemblies, where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men, animated by a desire to please. These societies were denominated *Blue-stocking Clubs*, the origin of which title being little known, it may be worth while to relate it. One of the most eminent members of these societies, when they first commenced, was Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet, (author of tracts relating to natural history, &c.) whose dress was remarkably grave, and in particular it was observed that *he wore blue stockings*. Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss, that it used to be said, 'We can do nothing without the *blue stockings*;' and thus by degrees the title was established. Miss Hannah More has admirably described a *Blue-stocking Club*, in her '*Bas Bleu*,' a poem in which many of the persons who were most conspicuous there are mentioned."

† A large mansion near Newport Pagnel, formerly belonging to Miss Wright.

‡ The Rev. Mr. Powley married Mrs. Unwin's daughter.

* Poor Kate and the Lace-maker were portraits drawn from real life.

† Mr. Chester, of Chicheley, near Newport Pagnel.

‡ Private correspondence.

from a man suffering by despair as I do. I could not sing the Lord's song were it to save my life, banished as I am, not to a strange land, but to a remoteness from his presence, in comparison with which the distance from east to west is no distance, is vicinity and cohesion. I dare not, either in prose or verse, allow myself to express a frame of mind which I am conscious does not belong to me; least of all can I venture to use the language of absolute resignation, lest, only counterfeiting, I should for that very reason be taken strictly at my word, and lose all my remaining comfort. Can there not be found among those translations of Madame Guion somewhat that might serve the purpose? I should think there might. Submission to the will of Christ, my memory tells me, is a theme that pervades them all. If so, your request is performed already; and if any alteration in them should be necessary, I will with all my heart make it. I have no objection to giving the graces of the foreigner an English dress, but insuperable ones to all false pretences and affected exhibitions of what I do not feel.

Hoping that you will have the graee to be resigned most perfectly to this disappointment, which you should not have suffered had it been in my power to prevent it, I remain, with our best remembrances to Mr. Thornton,

Ever affectionately yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 27, 1788.

My dear Coz.,—The General, in a letter which came yesterday, sent me inclosed a copy of my sonnet; thus introducing it.

"I send a copy of verses somebody has written for the Gentleman's Magazine for April last. Independent of my partiality towards the subject, I think the lines themselves are good."

Thus it appears that my poetical adventure has succeeded to my wish, and I write to him by this post, on purpose to inform him that the somebody in question is myself.*

I no longer wonder that Mrs. Montagu stands at the head of all that is called learned, and that every critic vails his bonnet to her superior judgment; I am now reading, and have reached the middle of her Essay on the Genius of Shakspeare; a book of which, strange as it may seem, though I must have read it formerly, I had absolutely forgot the existence.*

The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment, and the wit displayed in it, fully justify not only my compliment, but all compliments that either have been already paid to her talents, or shall be paid hereafter. Voltaire, I doubt not, rejoiced that his antagonist wrote in English, and that his countrymen could not possibly be judges of the dispute. Could they have known how much she was in the right, and by how many thousand miles the bard of Avon is superior to all their dramatists, the French critic would have lost half his fame among them.

I saw at Mr. Chester's a head of Paris; an antique of Parian marble. His uncle, who left him the estate, brought it, as I understand, from the Levant: you may suppose I viewed it with all the enthusiasm that belongs to a translator of Homer. It is in reality a great curiosity, and highly valuable.

Our friend Sephus† has sent me two prints; the Lace-maker and Crazy Kate. These also I have contemplated with pleasure, having, as you know, a particular interest in them. The former is not more beautiful than a lace-maker once our neighbor at Olney; though the artist has assembled as many charms in her countenance as I ever saw in any countenance, one excepted. Kate is both younger and handsomer than the original from which I drew, but she is in good style, and as mad as need be.

How does this hot weather suit thee, my dear, in London? as for me, with all my colonnades and bowers, I am quite oppressed by it. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 3, 1788.

My dearest Cousin,—The excessive heat of these last few days was indeed oppressive; but, excepting the languor that is occasioned both in my mind and body, it was far from being prejudicial to me. It opened ten thousand pores, by which as many mischiefs, the effects of long obstructions, began to breathe themselves forth abundantly. Then came an east wind, baneful to me at all times, but fol-

* Mr. Henry Cowper, who was reading-clerk in the House of Lords, was remarkable for the clearness and melody of his voice. This qualification is happily alluded to by the poet, in the following lines:—

"Thou art not voice alone, but hast besides
Both heart and head, and couldst with music sweet
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers,* far and wide
Thy fame diffuse, praised, not for utterance meet
Of others' speech, but magic of thy own."

* Lord-Chancellor Cowper, and Spencer Cowper, Chief-Justice of Chester.

* This essay contributed very much to establish the literary character of Mrs. Montagu, as a woman of taste and learning; and to vindicate Shakspeare from the sallies of the wit of Voltaire, who comprehended his genius as little as the immortal poem of the "Paradise Lost." It is well known how Young replied to his frivolous raillery on the latter work:—

"Thou art so witty, profligate, and thin,
At once we think thee Milton's Death and Sin."

† Mr. Hill.

lowing so closely such a sultry season, uncommonly noxious. To speak in the seaman's phrase, not entirely strange to you, *I was taken all aback;* and the humors which would have escaped, if old Eurus would have given them leave, finding every door shut, have fallen into my eyes. But, in a country like this, poor miserable mortals must be content to suffer all that sudden and violent changes can inflict; and if they are quit for about half the plagues that Caliban calls down on Prospero, they may say, "We are well off," and dance for joy, if the rheumatism or cramp will let them.

Did you ever see an advertisement by one Fowle, a dancing-master of Newport-Pagnel? If not, I will contrive to send it to you for your amusement. It is the most extravagantly ludicrous affair of the kind I ever saw. The author of it had the good hap to be crazed, or he had never produced anything half so clever; for you will ever observe, that they who are said to have lost their wits have more than other people. It is therefore only a slander, with which envy prompts the malignity of persons in their senses to asperse those wittier than themselves. But there are countries in the world where the mad have justice done them, where they are revered as the subjects of inspiration, and consulted as oracles. Poor Fowle would have made a figure there.

W. C.

In the next letter Cowper declines writing further on the subject of the slave trade: the horrors connected with it are the reasons assigned for this refusal. His past efforts in that cause are the best evidence of his ability to write upon it with powerful effect. The sensitive mind of Cowper shrunk with terror from these appalling atrocities.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston Lodge, June 5, 1788.

My dear Friend,—It is a comfort to me that you are so kind as to make allowance for me, in consideration of my being so busy a man. The truth is that, could I write with both hands, and with both at the same time, verse with one and prose with the other, I should not even so be able to despatch both my poetry and my arrears of correspondence faster than I have need. The only opportunities that I can find for conversing with distant friends are in the early hour (and that sometimes reduced to half a one) before breakfast. Neither am I exempt from hindrances, which, while they last, are insurmountable; especially one, by which I have been occasionally a sufferer all my life. I mean an inflammation of the eyes; a malady under which I have lately labored, and from which I am at this moment only in a small degree relieved. The last sudden change of the weather, from heat almost insupportable to a cold as severe as is commonly felt in midwinter, would have disabled me entirely for all sorts of scribbling, had I not favored the weak part a little, and given my eyes a respite.

It is certain that we do not live far from Olney, but small as the distance is, it has too often the effect of a separation between the Beans and us. He is a man with whom, when I can converse at all, I can converse on terms perfectly agreeable to myself; who does not distress me with forms, nor yet disgust me by the neglect of them; whose manners are easy and natural, and his observations always sensible. I often, therefore, wish them nearer neighbors.

We have heard nothing of the Powleys since they left us, a fortnight ago, and should be uneasy at their silence on such an occasion, did we not know that she cannot write, and that he, on his first return to his parish after a long absence, may possibly find it difficult. Her we found much improved in her health and spirits, and him, as always, affectionate and obliging. It was an agreeable visit, and, as it was ordered for me, I happened to have better spirits than I have enjoyed at any time since.

I shall rejoice if your friend Mr. Philips, influenced by what you told him of my present engagements, shall waive his applicatoin to me for a poem on the slave-trade. I account myself honored by his intention to solicit me on the subject, and it would give me pain to refuse him, which inevitably I shall be constrained to do. The more I have considered it, the more I have convinced myself that it is not a promising theme for verse. General censure on the iniquity of the practice will avail nothing. The world has been overwhelmed with such remarks already, and to particularize all the horrors of it were an employment for the mind both of the poet and his readers, of which they would necessarily soon grow weary. For my own part, I cannot contemplate the subject very nearly, without a degree of abhorrence that affects my spirits, and sinks them below the pitch requisite for success in verse. Lady Hesketh recommended it to me some months since, and then I declined it for these reasons, and for others which need not be mentioned here.

I return you many thanks for all your intelligence concerning the success of the gospel in far countries, and shall rejoice in a sight of Mr. Van Lier's letter,* which, being so voluminous, I think you should bring with you, when you take your flight to Weston, rather than commit to any other conveyance.

Remember that it is now summer, and that

* Private correspondence.

* Mr. Van Lier was a Dutch minister, to whom the perusal of Mr. Newton's works had been made eminently useful. We shall have occasion to allude to this subject in its proper place.

the summer flies fast, and that we shall be happy to see you and yours as speedily and for as long a time as you can afford. We are sorry, truly so, that Mrs. Newton is so frequently and so much indisposed. Accept our best love to you both, and believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

After what I have said on the subject of my writing engagements, I doubt not but you will excuse my transcribing the verses to Mrs. Montagu,* especially considering that my eyes are weary with what I have written this morning already. I feel somewhat like an impropriety in referring you to the next "Gentleman's Magazine," but at the present juncture I know not how to do better.

The death of Ashley Cowper, the father of Lady Hesketh and of Miss Theodora Cowper, the object of the poet's fond and early attachment, occurred at this period, and is the subject of the following letters. His reflections on this occasion are interesting and edifying.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, June 8, 1788.

My dear Friend,—Your letter brought me the very first intelligence of the event it mentions. My last letter from Lady Hesketh gave me reason enough to expect it, but the certainty of it was unknown to me till I learned it by your information. If gradual decline, the consequence of great age, be a sufficient preparation of the mind to encounter such a loss, our minds were certainly prepared to meet it; yet to you I need not say, that no preparation can supersede the feelings of the heart on such occasions. While our friends yet live inhabitants of the same world with ourselves, they seem still to live to *us;* we are sure that they sometimes think of us; and, however improbable it may seem, it is never impossible that we may see each other once again. But the grave, like a great gulf, swallows all such expectations, and, in the moment when a beloved friend sinks into it, a thousand tender recollections awaken a regret that will be felt in spite of all reasonings, and let our warnings have been what they may. Thus it is I take my last leave of poor Ashley, whose heart towards me was ever truly parental, and to whose memory I owe a tenderness and respect that will never leave me.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 10, 1788.

My dear Coz.,—Your kind letter of precaution to Mr. Gregson, sent him hither as soon as chapel service was ended in the evening. But he found me already apprized of the event that occasioned it, by a line from 'Sephus, received a few hours before. My dear uncle's death awakened in me many reflections, which for a time sunk my spirits. A man like him would have been mourned had he doubled the age he reached. At any age his death would have been felt as a loss, that no survivor could repair. And though it was not probable that, for my own part, I should ever see him more, yet the consciousness that he still lived was a comfort to me. Let it comfort us now, that we have lost him only at a time when nature could afford him to us no longer; that, as his life was blameless, so was his death without anguish, and that he is gone to heaven. I know not that human life, in its most prosperous state, can present anything to our wishes half so desirable as such a close of it.

Not to mingle this subject with others that would ill suit with it, I will add no more at present than a warm hope, that you and your sister* will be able effectually to avail yourselves of all the consolatory matter with which it abounds. You gave yourselves, while he lived, to a father, whose life was doubtless prolonged by your attentions, and whose tenderness of disposition made him always deeply sensible of your kindness in this respect, as well as in many others. His old age was the happiest that I have ever known, and I give you both joy of having had so fair an opportunity, and of having so well used it, to approve yourselves equal to the calls of such a duty in the sight of God and man.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 15, 1788.

Although I know that you must be very

* Miss Theodora Cowper.

* These verses, "On Mrs. Montagu's Feather Hangings," are characterized by elegant taste and a delicate turn of compliment. We insert an extract from them, as descriptive of her evening parties in Portman-square, the resort of cultivated wit and fashion, and so frequently alluded to in the interesting Memoirs of Mrs. More.

To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favor at her court,
Strong genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigor move,
Like Pallas, springing armed from Jove—
Imagination, scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which Labor of his frowns beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile—
Wit, flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrude on human notice more,
Like sun-beams, on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright—
Well-tutored Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
Their order, on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that, to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind—
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.

much occupied on the present most affecting occasion, yet, not hearing from you, I began to be very uneasy on your account, and to fear that your health might have suffered by the fatigue both of body and spirits that you must have undergone, till a letter that reached me yesterday from the General* set my heart at rest, so far as that cause of anxiety was in question. He speaks of my uncle in the tenderest terms, such as show how truly sensible he was of the amiableness and excellence of his character, and how deeply he regrets his loss. We have indeed lost one who has not left his like in the present generation of our family, and whose equal, in all respects, no future of it will probably produce. My memory retains so perfect an impression of him, that, had I been painter instead of poet, I could from those faithful traces have perpetuated his face and form with the most minute exactness: and this I the rather wonder at, because some with whom I was equally conversant five-and-twenty-years ago have almost faded out of all recollection with me. But he made impressions not soon to be effaced, and was in figure, in temper, in manner, and in numerous other respects, such as I shall never behold again. I often think what a joyful interview there has been between him and some of his contemporaries who went before him. The truth of the matter is, my dear, that they are the happy ones, and that we shall never be such ourselves till we have joined the party. Can there be anything so worthy of our warmest wishes as to enter on an eternal, unchangeable state, in blessed fellowship and communion with those whose society we valued most, and for the best reasons, while they continued with us? A few steps more through a vain, foolish world, and this happiness will be yours. But be not hasty, my dear, to accomplish thy journey! For of all that live thou art one whom I can least spare; for thou also art one, who shalt not leave thy equal behind thee. W. C.

The contrast between the awful scenes in nature, and those produced by the passions of men, is finely drawn in the following letter.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, June 17, 1788.

My dear Walter.—You think me, no doubt, a tardy correspondent, and such I am, but not willingly. Many hindrances have intervened, and the most difficult to surmount have been those which the east and north-east winds have occasioned, breathing winter upon the roses of June, and inflaming my eyes, ten times more sensible of the inconvenience than they. The vegetables of England seem, like our animals, of a hardier and bolder nature than those of other countries. In France and Italy flowers blow because it is warm, but here in spite of the cold. The season however is somewhat mended at present, and my eyes with it. Finding myself this morning in perfect ease of body, I seize the welcome opportunity to do something at least towards the discharge of my arrears to you.

I am glad that you liked my song, and, if I liked the others myself so well as that I sent you, I would transcribe for you them also. But I sent *that*, because I accounted it the best. Slavery, and especially negro slavery, because the cruellest, is an odious and disgusting subject. Twice or thrice I have been assailed with entreaties to write a poem on that theme. But, besides that it would be in some sort treason against Homer to abandon him for any other matter, I felt myself so much hurt in my spirits the moment I entered on the contemplation of it, that I have at last determined absolutely to have nothing more to do with it. There are some scenes of horror on which my imagination can dwell not without some complacence. But, then, they are such scenes as God, not man, produces. In earthquakes, high winds, tempestuous seas, there is the grand as well as the terrible. But, when man is active to disturb, there is such meanness in the design and such cruelty in the execution, that I both hate and despise the whole operation, and feel it a degradation of Poetry to employ her in the description of it. I hope also that the generality of my countrymen have more generosity in their nature than to want the fiddle of verse to go before them in the performance of an act to which they are invited by the loudest calls of humanity.

Breakfast calls, and then Homer.

Ever yours, W. C.

Erratum.—Instead of Mr. Wilberforce as author of "Manners of the Great," read Hannah More.

My paper mourns, and my seal. It is for the death of a venerable uncle, Ashley Cowper, at the age of eighty-seven.

Cowper's description of the variations of climate, and their influence on the nerves and constitution, is what most of his readers probably know from frequent experience of their effects.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, June 19, 1788.

My dear Madam,—You must think me a tardy correspondent, unless you have had

* General Cowper was nephew to Ashley Cowper.

* Private correspondence.

charity enough for me to suppose that I have met with other hindrances than those of indolence and inattention. With these I cannot charge myself, for I am never idle by choice; and inattentive to you I certainly have not been, but, on the contrary, can safely affirm that every day I have thought on you. My silence has been occasioned by a malady to which I have all my life been subject—an inflammation of the eyes. The last sudden change of weather from excessive heat to a wintry degree of cold occasioned it, and at the same time gave me a pinch of the rheumatic kind; from both which disorders I have but just recovered. I do not suppose that our climate has been much altered since the days of our forefathers, the Picts;* but certainly the human constitution in this country has been altered much. Inured as we are from our cradles to every vicissitude in a climate more various than any other, and in possession of all that modern refinement has been able to contrive for our security, we are yet as subject to blights as the tenderest blossoms of spring; and are so well admonished of every change in the atmosphere by our bodily feelings as hardly to have any need of a weather-glass to mark them. For this we are, no doubt, indebted to the multitude of our accommodations; for it was not possible to retain the hardiness that originally belonged to our race, under the delicate management to which for many years we have now been accustomed. I can hardly doubt that a bull-dog or a game-cock might be made just as susceptible of injuries from weather as myself, were he dieted and in all respects accommodated as I am. Or, if the project did not succeed in the first instance, (for we ourselves did not become what we are at once,) in process of time, however, and in a course of many generations, it would certainly take effect. Let such a dog be fed in his infancy with pap, Naples biscuit, and boiled chicken; let him be wrapt in flannel at night, sleep on a good feather-bed, and ride out in a coach for an airing; and if his posterity do not become slight-limbed, puny, and valetudinarian, it will be a wonder. Thus our parents, and their parents, and the parents of both were managed; and thus ourselves; and the consequence is, that instead of being weather-proof, even without clothing, furs and flannels are not warm enough to defend us. It is observable, however, that though we have by these means lost much of our pristine vigor, our days are not fewer. We live as long as those whom, on account of the sturdiness of their frame, the poets supposed to have been the progeny of oaks. Perhaps too they had little feeling, and for that reason also might be imagined to be so descended. For a very robust athletic habit seems inconsistent with much sensibility. But sensibility is the *sine quâ non* of real happiness. If, therefore, our lives have not been shortened, and if our feelings have been rendered more exquisite as our habit of body has become more delicate, on the whole perhaps we have no cause to complain, but are rather gainers by our degeneracy.

Do you consider what you do when you ask one poet his opinion of another? Yet I think I can give you an honest answer to your question, and without the least wish to nibble. Thomson was admirable in description: but it always seemed to me that there was somewhat of affectation in his style, and that his numbers are sometimes not well harmonized. I could wish too, with Dr. Johnson, that he had confined himself to this country; for, when he describes what he never saw, one is forced to read him with some allowance for possible misrepresentation. He was, however, a true poet, and his lasting fame has proved it. Believe me, my dear madam, with my best respects to Mr. King, most truly yours, W. C.

P. S.—I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and hope that your next will bring me a more favorable account of your health. I know not why, but I rather suspect that you do not allow yourself sufficient air and exercise. The physicians call them non-naturals, I suppose to deter their patients from the use of them.

* The Picts were not our ancestors.

The providence of God and the brevity of human life are subjects of profitable remark in the following letter.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, June 23, 1788.

When I tell you that an unanswered letter troubles my conscience in some degree like a crime, you will think me endued with a most heroic patience, who have so long submitted to that trouble on account of yours not answered yet. But the truth is, that I have been much engaged. Homer (you know) affords me constant employment: besides which, I have rather what may be called, considering the privacy with which I have long lived, a numerous correspondence: to one of my friends, in particular, a near and much loved relation, I write weekly, and sometimes twice in a week; nor are these my only excuses: the sudden changes of the weather have much affected me, and especially with a disorder most unfavorable to letter-writing, an inflammation in my eyes. With all these apologies, I approach you once more, not altogether despairing of forgiveness.

It has pleased God to give us rain, without which this part of the country at least must soon have become a desert. The meadows have been parched to a January brown, and we have foddered our cattle for some time, as in the winter. The goodness and power of God are never (I believe) so universally acknowledged as at the end of a long drought. Man is naturally a self-sufficient animal, and, in all concerns that seem to lie within the sphere of his own ability, thinks little or not at all of the need he always has of protection and furtherance from above. But he is sensible that the clouds will not assemble at his bidding, and that, though the clouds assemble, they will not fall down in showers, because he commands them. When therefore at last the blessing descends, you shall hear even in the streets the most irreligious and thoughtless with one voice exclaim, "Thank God!"—confessing themselves indebted to his favor, and willing, at least so far as words go, to give him the glory. I can hardly doubt, therefore, that the earth is sometimes parched, and the crops endangered in order that the multitude may not want a memento to whom they owe them, nor absolutely forget the power on which all depend for all things.

Our solitary part of the year is over. Mrs. Unwin's daughter and son-in-law have lately spent some time with us. We shall shortly receive from London our old friends the Newtons (he was once minister of Olney), and when they leave us, we expect that Lady Hesketh will succeed them, perhaps to spend the summer here, and possibly the winter also. The summer indeed is leaving us at a rapid rate, as do all the seasons; and though I have marked their flight so often, I know not which is the swiftest. Man is never so deluded as when he dreams of his own duration. The answer of the old patriarch to Pharaoh may be adopted by every man at the close of the longest life: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." Whether we look back from fifty, or from twice fifty, the past appears equally a dream; and we can only be said truly to have lived, while we have been profitably employed. Alas! then, making the necessary deductions, how short is life! Were men in general to save themselves all the steps they take to no purpose, or to a bad one, what numbers, who are now active, would become sedentary!

Thus I have sermonized through my paper. Living where you live, you can bear with me the better. I always follow the leading of my unconstrained thoughts, when I write to a friend, be they grave or otherwise. Homer reminds me of you every day. I am now in the twenty-first Iliad.

Adieu. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

June 24, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I rejoice that my letter found you at all points so well prepared to answer it according to our wishes. I have written to Lady Hesketh to apprise her of your intended journey hither, and she, having as yet made no assignation with us herself, will easily adjust her measures to the occasion.

I have not lately had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Bean. The late rains, which have revived the hopes of the farmers, have intercepted our communication. I hear, however, that he meets with not a little trouble in his progress towards a reformation of Olney manners; and that the Sabbath, which he wishes to have hallowed by a stricter and more general observation of it, is, through the brutality of the lowest order, a day of more turbulence and riot than any other. At the latter end of last week he found himself obliged to make another trip to the justice, in company with two or three of the principal inhabitants. What passed I have not learned; but I understand their errand to have been, partly at least, to efface the evil impressions made on his worship's mind, by a man who had applied a day or two before for a warrant against the constable; which, however, he did not obtain. I rather fear that the constables are not altogether judicious in the exercise either of their justice or their mercy. Some, who may have seemed proper objects of punishment, they have released, on a promise of better behavior; and others, whose offence has been personal against themselves, though in other respects less guilty, they have set in the stocks. The ladies, however, and of course the ladies of Silver-End in particular, give them most trouble, being always active on these occasions, as well as clamorous, and both with impunity. For the sex are privileged in the free use of their tongues and of their nails, the parliament having never yet laid them under any penal restrictions; and they employ them accordingly. Johnson, the constable, lost much of his skin, and still more of his coat, in one of those Sunday battles; and had not Ashburner hastened to his aid, had probably been completely stripped of both. With such a zeal are these fair ones animated, though, unfortunately for all parties, rather erroneously.

What you tell me of the effect that the limitation of numbers to tonnage is likely to have on the slave trade, gives me the greatest pleasure.† Should it amount, in the issue, to an abolition of the traffic, I shall

* Private correspondence.

† The credit of having introduced this regulation is due to the late much respected Sir William Dolben, Bart.

account it indeed an argument of great wisdom in our youthful minister. A silent and indirect way of doing it, is, I suppose the only safe one. At the same time, in how horrid a light does it place the trade itself, when it comes to be proved by consequences that the mere article of a little elbow-room for the poor creatures in their passage to the islands could not be secured by an order of parliament, without the utter annihilation of it! If so it prove, no man deserving to be called a man, can say that it ought to subsist a moment longer. My writing time is expended, and breakfast is at hand. With our joint love to the trio, and our best wishes for your good journey to Weston, I remain, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

The next letter contains an interesting incident, recorded of his dog Beau, and the verses composed on the occasion.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 27, 1788.

For the sake of a longer visit, my dearest Coz, I can be well content to wait. The country, this country at least, is pleasant at all times, and when winter is come, or near at hand, we shall have the better chance for being snug. I know your passion for retirement indeed, or for what we call *deedy* retirement, and, the F——s intending to return to Bath with their mother, when her visit at the Hall is over, you will then find here exactly the retirement in question. I have made in the orchard the best winter-walk in all the parish, sheltered from the east and from the north-east, and open to the sun, except at his rising, all the day. Then we will have Homer and Don Quixote; and then we will have saunter and chat and one laugh more before we die. Our orchard is alive with creatures of all kinds: poultry of every denomination swarms in it, and pigs, the drollest in the world!

I rejoice that we have a cousin Charles also, as well as a cousin Henry, who has had the address to win the good likings of the Chancellor. May he fare the better for it. As to myself, I have long since ceased to have any expectations from that quarter. Yet, if he were indeed mortified as you say (and no doubt you have particular reasons for thinking so), and repented to that degree of his hasty exertions in favor of the present occupant, who can tell? He wants neither means nor management, but can easily at some future period redress the evil, if he chooses to do it. But in the meantime life steals away, and shortly neither he will be in circumstances to do me a kindness, nor I to receive one at his hands. Let him make haste, therefore, or he will die a promise in my debt, which he will never be able to perform.* Your communications on this subject are as safe as you can wish them. We divulge nothing but what might appear in the magazine, nor that without great consideration.

I must tell you a feat of my dog Beau. Walking by the river-side, I observed some water-lilies floating at a little distance from the bank. They are a large white flower, with an orange-colored eye, very beautiful. I had a desire to gather one, and, having your long cane in my hand, by the help of it endeavored to bring one of them within my reach. But the attempt proved vain, and I walked forward. Beau had all the while observed me very attentively. Returning soon after toward the same place, I observed him plunge into the river, while I was about forty yards distant from him; and, when I had nearly reached the spot, he swam to land with a lily in his mouth, which he came and laid at my foot.

Mr. Rose, whom I have mentioned to you as a visitor of mine for the first time soon after you left us, writes me word that he has seen my ballads against the slave-mongers, but not in print.† Where he met with them I know not. Mr. Bull begged hard for leave to print them at Newport-Pagnel, and I refused, thinking that it would be wrong to anticipate the nobility, gentry, and others, at whose pressing instance I composed them, in their designs to print them. But perhaps I need not have been so squeamish: for the opportunity to publish them in London seems now not only ripe, but rotten. I am well content. There is but one of them with which I am myself satisfied, though I have heard them all well spoken of. But there are very few things of my own composition that I can endure to read, when they have been written a month, though at first they seem to me to be all perfection.

Mrs. Unwin, who has been much the happier since the time of your return hither has been in some sort settled, begs me to make her kindest remembrance.

Yours, my dear, most truly, W. C.

The following verses are so singularly beautiful, and interesting from the incident which gave rise to them, that, though they are inserted in the Poems, we cannot refrain from introducing them, in connexion with the letter which records the occasion of their being written.

* Lord Thurlow, it will be remembered, pledged himself to make some provision for Cowper, if he became Lord Chancellor.

† We have elsewhere observed that they never were printed as ballads, but were inserted in his works.

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

No Fable.

The noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wandered on his side.

My spaniel prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,—
Two nymphs* adorned with every grace
That spaniel found for me,—

Now wantoned, lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent surveyed,
And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
With fixed considerate face,
And, puzzling, set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But, with a chirrup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and followed long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned,
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discerned,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him, with that lily cropped,
Impatient swim, to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropped
The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, "The world," I cried,
"Shall hear of this thy deed;
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed.

"But chief myself I will enjoin—
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all."

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

July 6, 1788.

My dear Friend,—"Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear" have compelled me to draw on you for the sum of twenty pounds, payable to John Higgins, Esq., or order. The draft bears date July 5th. You will excuse my giving you this trouble, in consideration that I am a poet, and can consequently draw for money much easier than I can earn it.

I heard of you a few days since, from Walter Bagot, who called here and told me that you were gone, I think, into Rutlandshire, to settle the accounts of a large estate unliquidated many years. Intricacies that would turn my brains are play to you. But I give you joy of a long vacation at hand, when I suppose that even you will find it pleasant, if not to be idle, at least not to be hemmed around by business.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, July 28, 1788.

It is in vain that you tell me that you have no talent at description, while in fact you describe better than anybody. You have given me a most complete idea of your mansion and its situation; and I doubt not that, with your letter in my hand by way of map, could I be set down on the spot in a moment, I should find myself qualified to take my walks and my pastime in whatever quarter of your paradise it should please me the most to visit. We also, as you know, have scenes at Weston worthy of description; but, because you know them well, I will only say, that one of them has, within these few days been much improved; I mean the lime-walk. By the help of the axe and the wood-bill, which have of late been constantly employed in cutting out all straggling branches that intercepted the arch, Mr. Throckmorton has now defined it with such exactness that no cathedral in the world can show one of more magnificence or beauty. I bless myself that I live so near it; for, were it distant several miles, it would be well worth while to visit it, merely as an object of taste; not to mention the refreshment of such a gloom both to the eyes and spirits. And these are the things which our modern improvers of parks and pleasure-grounds have displaced without mercy: because, forsooth, they are rectilinear. It is a wonder that they do not quarrel with the sunbeams for the same reason.

Have you seen the account of five hundred celebrated authors now living?* I am one of them; but stand charged with the high crime and misdemeanor of totally neglecting method; an accusation, which, if the gentleman would take the pains to read me, he would find sufficiently refuted. I am conscious at least myself of having labored much in the arrangement of my matter, and of having given to the several parts of every book of "The Task," as well as to each poem in the first volume, that sort of slight connexion which poetry demands; for in poetry (except professedly of the didactic kind) a logical precision would be stiff, pe-

* The Miss Gunnings, the daughters of Sir Robert Gunning, Bart.

† Private correspondence.

* A book full of blunders and [illegible], and destitute both of information and interest.

dantic, and ridiculous. But there is no pleasing some critics; the comfort is, that I am contented whether they be pleased or not. At the same time, to my honor be it spoken, the chronicler of us five hundred prodigies bestows on me, for aught I know, more commendations than on any other of my confraternity. May he live to write the histories of as many thousand poets, and find me the very best among them! Amen!

I join with you, my dearest coz, in wishing that I owned the fee simple of all the beautiful scenes around you, but such emoluments were never designed for poets. Am I not happier than ever poet was in having thee for my cousin, and in the expectation of thy arrival here whenever Strawberry-hill* shall lose thee.

Ever thine, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Aug. 9, 1788.

The Newtons are still here, and continue with us, I believe, until the 15th of the month. Here is also my friend, Mr. Rose, a valuable young man, who, attracted by the effluvia of my genius, found me out in my retirement last January twelvemonth. I have not permitted him to be idle, but have made him transcribe for me the twelfth book of the Iliad. He brings me the compliments of several of the literati, with whom he is acquainted in town, and tells me, that from Dr. Maclain,† whom he saw lately, he learns that my book is in the hands of sixty different persons at the Hague, who are all enchanted with it; not forgetting the said Dr. Maclain himself, who tells him that he reads it every day, and is always the better for it. O rare we!

I have been employed this morning in composing a Latin motto for the king's clock, the embellishments of which are by Mr. Bacon. That gentleman breakfasted with us on Wednesday, having come thirty-seven miles out of his way on purpose to see your cousin. At his request I have done it, and have made two, he will choose that which liketh him best. Mr. Bacon is a most excellent man, and a most agreeable companion; I would that he lived not so remote, or that he had more opportunity of travelling.

There is not, so far as I know, a syllable of the rhyming correspondence between me and my poor brother left, save and except the six lines of it quoted in yours. I *had* the whole of it, but it perished in the wreck of a thousand other things when I left the Temple.

Breakfast calls. Adieu! W. C.

* The celebrated seat of Lord Orford, near Richmond, where Lady Hesketh was then visiting.

† The well-known translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 18, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I left you with a sensible regret, alleviated only by the consideration, that I shall see you again in October. I was under some concern also, lest, not being able to give you any certain directions myself, nor knowing where you might find a guide, should you wander and fatigue yourself, good walker as you are, before you could reach Northampton. Perhaps you heard me whistle just after our separation; it was to call back Beau, who was running after you with all speed to entreat you to return with me. For my part, I took my own time to return, and did not reach home till after one, and then so weary that I was glad of my great chair; to the comforts of which I added a crust, and a glass of rum and water, not without great occasion. Such a foot-traveller am I.

I am writing on Monday, but whether I shall finish my letter this morning depends on Mrs. Unwin's coming sooner or later down to breakfast. Something tells me that you set off to-day for Birmingham; and though it be a sort of Irishism to say here, I beseech you take care of yourself, for the day threatens great heat, I cannot help it; the weather may be cold enough at the time when that good advice shall reach you, but, be it hot or be it cold, to a man who travels as you travel, take care of yourself can never be an unseasonable caution. I am sometimes distressed on this account, for though you are young, and well made for such exploits, those very circumstances are more likely than anything to betray you into danger.

Consule quid valeant PLANTÆ, quid ferre recusent.

The Newtons left us on Friday. We frequently talked about you after your departure, and everything that was spoken was to your advantage. I know they will be glad to see you in London, and perhaps, when your summer and autumn rambles are over, you will afford them that pleasure. The Throckmortons are equally well disposed to you, and them also I recommend to you as a valuable connexion, the rather because you can only cultivate it at Weston.

I have not been idle since you went, having not only labored as usual at the Iliad, but composed a *spick* and *span* new piece, called "The Dog, and the Water-Lily," which you shall see when we meet again. I believe I related to you the incident which is the subject of it. I have also read most of Lavater's Aphorisms: they appear to me some of them wise, many of them whimsical, a few of them false, and not a few of them extravagant. *Nil illi medium.* If he finds in a man the

feature or quality that he approves, he deifies him; if the contrary, he is a devil. His verdict is in neither case, I suppose, a just one.*

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

August 28, 1788.

My dear Madam,—Should you discard me from the number of your correspondents, you would treat me as I seem to deserve, though I do not actually deserve it. I have lately been engaged with company at our house, who resided with us five weeks, and have had much of the rheumatism into the bargain. Not in my fingers, you will say—True. But you know as well as I, that pain, be it where it may, indisposes us to writing.

You express some degree of wonder that I found you out to be sedentary, at least much a stayer within doors, without any sufficient data for my direction. Now, if I should guess your figure and stature with equal success, you will deem me not only a poet but a conjurer. Yet in fact I have no pretensions of that sort. I have only formed a picture of you in my own imagination, as we ever do of a person of whom we think much, though we have never seen that person. Your height I conceive to be about five feet five inches, which, though it would make a short man, is yet height enough for a woman. If you insist on an inch or two more, I have no objection. You are not very fat, but somewhat inclined to be fat, and unless you allow yourself a little more air and exercise, will incur some danger of exceeding in your dimensions before you die. Let me, therefore, once more recommend to you to walk a little more, at least in your garden, and to amuse yourself occasionally with pulling up here and there a weed, for it will be an inconvenience to you to be much fatter than you are, at a time of life when your strength will be naturally on the decline. I have given you a fair complexion, a slight tinge of the rose in your cheeks, dark brown hair, and, if the fashion would give you leave to show it, an open and well-formed forehead. To all this I add a pair of eyes not quite black, but nearly approaching to that hue, and very animated. I have not absolutely determined on the shape of your nose, or the form of your mouth; but should you tell me that I have in other respects drawn a tolerable likeness, have no doubt but I can describe them too. I assure you that though I have a great desire to read him, I have never seen Lavater, nor have availed myself in the least of any of his rules on this occasion. Ah, madam! if with all that sensibility of yours, which exposes you to so much sorrow, and necessarily must expose you to it, in a world like this, I have had the good fortune to make you smile, I have then painted you, whether with a strong resemblance, or with none at all, to very good purpose.*

I had intended to have sent you a little poem, which I have lately finished, but have no room to transcribe it.† You shall have it by another opportunity. Breakfast is on the table, and my time also fails, as well as my paper. I rejoice that a cousin of yours found my volumes agreeable to him, for, being your cousin, I will be answerable for his good taste and judgment.

When I wrote last, I was in mourning for a dear and much-valued uncle, Ashley Cowper. He died at the age of eighty-six. My best respects attend Mr. King: and I am, dear madam,

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.‡

Weston Lodge, Sept. 2, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I rejoice that you and yours reached London safe, especially when I reflect that you performed the journey on a day so fatal, as I understand, to others travelling the same road. I found those comforts in your visit which have formerly sweetened all our interviews, in part restored. I knew you; knew you for the same shepherd

* Cowper's strictures on Lavater are rather severe; in a subsequent letter we shall find that he expresses himself almost in the language of a disciple. We believe all men to be physiognomists, that is, they are guided in their estimate of one another by external impressions, until they are furnished with better data to determine their judgment. The countenance is often the faithful mirror of the inward emotions of the soul, in the same manner as the light and shade on the mountain's side exhibit the variations of the atmosphere. In the curious and valuable cabinet of Denon, in Paris, which was sold in 1827, two casts taken from Robespierre and Marat were singularly expressive of the atrocity of their character. The cast of an idiot, in the same collection, denoted the total absence of intellect. But, whatever may be our sentiments on this subject, there is one noble act of benevolence which has justly endeared the name of Lavater to his country. We allude to the celebrated Orphan Institution at Zurich, of which he was the founder. It is a handsome and commodious establishment, where these interesting objects of humanity receive a suitable education, and are fitted for future usefulness. The church is shown where John Gaspar Lavater officiated, surrounded by his youthful auditory; and an humble stone in the churchyard briefly records his name and virtues. His own Orphan-house is the most honorable monument of his fame. It is in visiting scenes like these that we feel the moral dignity of our nature, that the heart becomes expanded with generous emotions, and that we learn to imitate that Divine Master, who went about doing good. The Editor could not avoid regretting that, in his own country, where charity assumes almost every possible form, the Orphan-house is of rare occurrence, though abounding in most of the cities of Switzerland. Where are the philanthropists of Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, and of our other great towns? Surely, to wipe away the tear from the cheek of the orphan, to rescue want from destitution and unprotected innocence from exposure to vice and ruin, must ever be considered to be one of the noblest efforts of Christian benevolence.

† Private correspondence.

* Cowper's fancy was never more erroneously employed. The portrait he here draws of Mrs. King possessed no resemblance to the original.

† The Dog and the Water-Lily.

‡ Private correspondence.

who was sent to lead me out of the wilderness into the pasture where the chief Shepherd feeds his flock, and felt my sentiments of affectionate friendship for you the same as ever.* But one thing was still wanting, and that thing the crown of all. I shall find it in God's time, if it be not lost forever. When I say this, I say it trembling; for at what time soever comfort shall come, it will not come without its attendant evil; and, whatever good thing may occur in the interval, I have sad forebodings of the event, having learned by experience that I was born to be persecuted with peculiar fury, and assuredly believing, that, such as my lot has been, it will be so to the end. This belief is connected in my mind with an observation I have often made, and is perhaps founded in great part upon it: that there is a certain *style* of dispensations maintained by Providence in the dealings of God with every man, which, however the incidents of his life may vary, and though he may be thrown into many different situations, is never exchanged for another. The style of dispensation peculiar to myself has hitherto been that of sudden, violent, unlooked-for change. When I have thought myself falling into the abyss, I have been caught up again; when I have thought myself on the threshold of a happy eternity, I have been thrust down to hell. The rough and the smooth of such a lot, taken together, should perhaps have taught me never to despair; but, through an unhappy propensity in my nature to forebode the worst, they have on the contrary operated as an admonition to me never to hope. A firm persuasion that I can never durably enjoy a comfortable state of mind, but must be depressed in proportion as I have been elevated, withers my joys in the bud, and, in a manner, entombs them before they are born; for I have no expectation but of sad vicissitude, and ever believe that the last shock of all will be fatal.

Mr. Bean has still some trouble with his parishioners. The suppression of five public-houses is the occasion.† He called on me yesterday morning for advice; though, discreet as he is himself, he has little need of such council as I can give him. ——, who is subtle as a dozen foxes, met him on Sunday, exactly at his descent from the pulpit, and proposed to him a general meeting of the parish in vestry on the subject. Mr. Bean, attacked so suddenly, consented, but afterwards repented that he had done so, assured as he was that he should be out-voted. There seemed no remedy but to apprise them beforehand that he would meet them indeed, but not with a view to have the question decided by a majority: that he would take that opportunity to make his allegations against each of the houses in question, which if they could refute, well: if not, they could no longer reasonably oppose his measures.— This was what he came to submit to my opinion. I could do no less than approve it; and he left me with a purpose to declare his mind to them immediately.

I beg that you will give my affectionate respects to Mr. Bacon, and assure him of my sincere desire that he should think himself perfectly at liberty respecting the mottoes, to choose one or to reject both, as likes him best. I wish also to be remembered with much affection to Mrs. Cowper, and always rejoice to hear of her well-being.

Believe me, as I truly am, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

W. C.

* It was a singular delusion under which Cowper labored, and seems to be inexplicable; but it is not less true that, for many years, he doubted the identity of Mr. Newton. When we see the powers of a great mind liable to such instances of delusion, and occasionally suffering an entire eclipse, how irresistibly are we led to exclaim, "Lord, what is man!"

† The late Rev. H. Colbourne Ridley, the excellent vicar of Hambleden, near Henley-on-Thames, distinguished for his parochial plans and general devotedness to his professional duties, once observed that the fruit of all his labors, during a residence of five-and-twenty years, was destroyed in one single year by the introduction of beer-houses, and their demoralizing effects.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 11, 1788.

My dear Friend.—Since your departure I have twice visited the oak, and with an intention to push my inquiries a mile beyond it, where it seems I should have found another oak, much larger and much more respectable than the former; but once I was hindered by the rain, and once by the sultriness of the day. This latter oak has been known by the name of Judith many ages, and is said to have been an oak at the time of the Conquest.* If I have not an opportunity to reach it before your arrival here, we will attempt that exploit together, and even if I should have been able to visit it ere you come, I shall yet be glad to do so, for the pleasure of extraordinary sights, like all other pleasures, is doubled by the participation of a friend.

You wish for a copy of my little dog's epi-

* This celebrated oak, which is situated in Yardley Chase, near Lord Northampton's residence at Castle Ashby, has furnished the muse of Cowper with an occasion for displaying all the graces of his rich poetical fancy. The poem will be inserted in a subsequent part of the work. In the meantime we extract the following lines from "The Task," to show how the descriptive powers of Cowper were awakened by this favorite and inspiring subject.

. . . . . "The oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder; but the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixed below, the more disturb'd above."

The Sofa.

gium, which I will therefore transcribe, but by so doing I shall leave myself but scanty room for prose.

I shall be sorry if our neighbors at the Hall should have left it, when we have the pleasure of seeing you. I want you to see them soon again, that a little *consuetudo* may wear off restraint; and you may be able to improve the advantage you have already gained in that quarter. I pitied you for the fears which deprived you of your uncle's company, and the more having suffered so much by those fears myself. Fight against that vicious fear, for such it is, as strenuously as you can. It is the worst enemy that can attack a man destined to the forum—it ruined me. To associate as much as possible with the most respectable company, for good sense and good breeding is, I believe the only, at least I am sure it is the best remedy. The society of men of pleasure will not cure it, but rather leaves us more exposed to its influence in company of better persons.

Now for the "Dog and the Water-Lily."*

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

Weston Lodge, Sept. 25, 1788.

My dearest Madam,—How surprised was I this moment to meet a servant at the gate, who told me that he came from you. He could not have been more welcome unless he had announced yourself. I am charmed with your kindness, and with all your elegant presents; so is Mrs. Unwin, who begs me in particular to thank you warmly for the housewife, the very thing she had just begun to want. In the firescreen you have sent me an enigma which at present I have not the ingenuity to expound; but some muse will help me, or I shall meet with somebody able to instruct me. In all that I have seen besides, for that I have not yet seen, I admire both the taste and the execution. A toothpick case I had; but one so large, that no modern waistcoat pocket could possibly contain it. It was some years since the Dean of Durham's, for whose sake I valued it, though to me useless. Yours is come opportunely to supply the deficiency, and shall be my constant companion to its last thread. The cakes and apples we will eat, remembering who sent them, and when I say this, I will add also, that when we have neither apples nor cakes to eat, we will still remember you. What the MS. poem can be, that you suppose to have been written by me, I am not able to guess; and since you will not allow that I have guessed your person well, am become shy of exercising conjecture on any meaner subject. Perhaps they may be some mortuary verses, which I wrote last year, at the request of a certain parish-clerk. If not, and you have never seen them, I will send you them hereafter.

You have been at Bedford. Bedford is but twelve miles from Weston. When you are at home, we are but eighteen miles asunder. Is it possible that such a paltry interval can separate us always? I will never believe it. Our house is going to be filled by a cousin of mine and her train, who will, I hope, spend the winter with us. I cannot, therefore, repeat my invitation at present, but expect me to be very troublesome on that theme next summer. I could almost scold you for not making Weston in your way home from Bedford. Though I am neither a relation, nor quite eighty-six years of age,* believe me, I should as much rejoice to see you and Mr. King, as if I were both.

I send you, my dear madam, the poem I promised you, and shall be glad to send you anything and everything I write, as fast as it flows. Behold my two volumes! which, though your old acquaintance, I thought might receive an additional recommendation in the shape of a present from myself.

What I have written I know not, for all has been scribbled in haste. I will not tempt your servant's honesty, who seems by his countenance to have a great deal, being equally watchful to preserve uncorrupted the honesty of my own.

I am, my dearest madam, with a thousand thanks for this stroke of friendship, which I feel at my heart, and with Mrs. Unwin's very best respects, most sincerely yours,

W. C.

P. S. My two hares died little more than two years since, one of them aged ten years, the other eleven years and eleven months.†

Our compliments attend Mr. King

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 25, 1788.

My dear Friend,—

Say what is the thing, by my riddle design'd,
Which you carried to London, and yet left behind.

I expect your answer, and without a fee.—The half hour next before breakfast I devote to you. The moment Mrs. Unwin arrives in the study, be what I have written much or little, I shall make my bow, and take leave. If you live to be a judge, as, if I augur right, you will, I shall expect to hear of a walking circuit.

I was shocked at what you tell me of ——:

* This has already been inserted.

† Private correspondence.

* Mrs. Battison, a relative of Mrs. King's, and at this advanced age, was in a very declining state of health.

† There is a little memoir of Cowper's hares, written by himself, which will be inserted in his works.

superior talents, it seems, give no security for propriety of conduct; on the contrary, having a natural tendency to nourish pride, they often betray the possessor into such mistakes as men more moderately gifted never commit. Ability, therefore, is not wisdom, and an ounce of grace is a better guard against gross absurdity than the brightest talents in the world.

I rejoice that you are prepared for transcript work: here will be plenty for you. The day on which you shall receive this, I beg you will remember to drink one glass at least to the success of the Iliad, which I finished the day before yesterday, and yesterday began the Odyssey. It will be some time before I shall perceive myself travelling in another road; the objects around me are at present so much the same; Olympus, and a council of gods, meet me at my first entrance. To tell you the truth, I am weary of heroes and deities, and, with reverence be it spoken, shall be glad for variety's sake, to exchange their company for that of a Cyclops.

Weston has not been without its tragedies since you left us; Mrs. Throckmorton's piping bullfinch has been eaten by a rat, and the villain left nothing but poor Bully's beak behind him. It will be a wonder if this event does not at some convenient time employ my versifying passion. Did ever fair lady, from the Lesbia of Catullus to the present day, lose her bird, and find no poet to commemorate the loss? W. C.

Cowper here gives an amusing account of the manner in which he employed his hours of recreation, at different periods of his life.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston Lodge, Oct. 11, 1788.

My dear Madam,—You are perfectly secure from all danger of being overwhelmed with presents from me. It is not much that a poet can possibly have it in his power to give. When he has presented his own works, he may be supposed to have exhausted all means of donation. They are his only superfluity. There was a time, but that time was before I commenced writer for the press, when I amused myself in a way somewhat similar to yours; allowing, I mean, for the difference between masculine and female operations. The scissors and the needle are your chief implements; mine were the chisel and the saw. In those days you might have been in some danger of too plentiful a return for your favors. Tables, such as they were, and joint-stools, such as never were, might have travelled to Perten-hall in most inconvenient abundance. But I have long since discontinued this practice, and many others which I found it necessary to adopt that I might escape the worst of all evils, both in itself and in its consequences—an idle life. Many arts I have exercised with this view, for which nature never designed me; though among them were some in which I arrived at considerable proficiency, by mere dint of the most heroic perseverance. There is not a 'squire in all this country who can boast of having made better squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than myself; and in the article of cabbage-nets I had no superior. I even had the hardiness to take in hand the pencil, and studied a whole year the art of drawing. Many figures were the fruit of my labors, which had, at least, the merit of being unparalleled by any production either of art or nature. But, before the year was ended, I had occasion to wonder at the progress that may be made, in despite of natural deficiency, by dint alone of practice; for I actually produced three landscapes, which a lady thought worthy to be framed and glazed. I then judged it high time to exchange this occupation for another, lest, by any subsequent productions of inferior merit, I should forfeit the honor I had so fortunately acquired. But gardening was, of all employments, that in which I succeeded best; though even in this I did not suddenly attain perfection. I began with lettuces and cauliflowers: from them I proceeded to cucumbers; next to melons. I then purchased an orange tree, to which, in due time, I added two or three myrtles. These served me day and night with employment during a whole severe winter. To defend them from the frost, in a situation that exposed them to its severity, cost me much ingenuity and much attendance. I contrived to give them a fire heat; and have waded night after night through the snow, with the bellows under my arm, just before going to bed, to give the latest possible puff to the embers, lest the frost should seize them before the morning. Very minute beginnings have sometimes important consequences. From nursing two or three little evergreens, I became ambitious of a greenhouse, and accordingly built one; which, verse excepted, afforded me amusement for a longer time than any expedient of all the many to which I have fled for refuge from the misery of having nothing to do. When I left Olney for Weston, I could no longer have a greenhouse of my own; but in a neighbor's garden I find a better, of which the sole management is confined to me.

I had need take care, when I begin a letter, that the subject with which I set off be of some importance; for before I can exhaust it, be it what it may, I have generally filled my paper. But self is a subject inexhaustible, which is the reason that though I have said

* Private correspondence.

little, and nothing, I am afraid, worth your hearing, I have only room to add that I am, my dear madam,

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

The Lodge, Nov. 29, 1788.

My dear Friend,—Not to fill my paper with apologies, I will only say that you know my occupation, and how little time it leaves me for other employments; in which, had I leisure for them, I could take much pleasure. Letter-writing could be one of the most agreeable, and especially writing to you.

Poor Jenny Raban is declining fast towards the grave, and as fast aspiring to the skies. I expected to have heard yesterday of her death; but learned, on inquiry, that she was better. Dr. Kerr has seen her, and, by virtue I suppose of his prescriptions, her fits, with which she was frequently troubled, are become less frequent. But there is no reason, I believe, to look for her recovery. Her case is a consumption, into which I saw her sliding swiftly in the spring. There is not much to be lamented, or that ought to be so, in the death of those that go to glory.

If you find many blots, and my writing illegible, you must pardon them, in consideration of the cause. Lady Hesketh and Mrs. Unwin are both talking as if they designed to make themselves amends for the silence they are enjoined while I sit translating Homer. Mrs. Unwin is preparing the breakfast, and, not having seen each other since they parted to go to bed, they have consequently a deal to communicate.

I have seen Mr. Greatheed, both in his own house and here.† Prosperity sits well on him, and I cannot find that this advantageous change in his condition has made any alteration either in his views or his behavior. The winter is gliding merrily away, while my cousin is with us. She annihilates the difference between cold and heat, gloomy skies and cloudless. I have written I know not what, and with the despatch of legerdemain; but with the utmost truth and consciousness of what I say, assure you, my dear friend, that I am

Ever yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 30, 1788.

My dear Friend,—Your letter accompanying the books with which you have favored me, and for which I return you a thousand thanks, did not arrive till yesterday. I shall have great pleasure in taking now and then a peep at my old friend Vincent Bourne; the neatest of all men in his versification, though, when I was under his ushership at Westminster, the most slovenly in his person. He was so inattentive to his boys, and so indifferent whether they brought him good or bad exercises, or none at all, that he seemed determined, as he was the best, so to be the last Latin poet of the Westminster line; a plot which, I believe, he executed very successfully, for I have not heard of any who has deserved to be compared with him.

We have had hardly any rain or snow since you left us; the roads are accordingly as dry as in the middle of summer, and the opportunity of walking much more favorable. We have no season, in my mind, so pleasant as such a winter; and I account it particularly fortunate, that such it proves, my cousin being with us. She is in good health, and cheerful, so are we all; and this I say, knowing you will be glad to hear it, for you have seen the time when this could not be said of all your friends at Weston. We shall rejoice to see you here at Christmas; but I recollect, when I hinted such an excursion by word of mouth, you gave me no great encouragement to expect you. Minds alter, and yours may be of the number of those that do so; and, if it should, you will be entirely welcome to us all. Were there no other reason for your coming than merely the pleasure it will afford to us, that reason alone would be sufficient: but, after so many toils, and with so many more in prospect, it seems essential to your well-being that you should allow yourself a respite, which perhaps you can take as comfortably (I am sure as quietly) here as anywhere.

The ladies beg to be remembered to you with all possible esteem and regard; they are just come down to breakfast, and, being at this moment extremely talkative, oblige me to put an end to my letter.

Adieu. W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, Dec. 6, 1788.

My dear Madam,—It must, if you please, be a point agreed between us, that we will not make punctuality in writing the test of our regard for each other, lest we should incur the danger of pronouncing and suffering by an unjust sentence, and this mutually. I have told you, I believe, that the half hour before breakfast is my only letter-writing opportunity. In summer I rise rather early, and consequently at that season can find more time for scribbling than at present. If I enter my study now before nine, I find all at sixes and sevens; for servants will take, in part at least, the liberty claimed by their

* Private correspondence.

† Mr. Greatheed was now residing at Newport-Pagnel, and exercising his ministry there.

* Private correspondence.

masters. That you may not suppose us all sluggards alike, it is necessary, however, that I should add a word or two on this subject, in justification of Mrs. Unwin, who, because the days are too short for the important concerns of knitting stockings and mending them, rises generally by candle-light; a practice so much in the style of all the ladies of antiquity who were good for anything, that it is impossible not to applaud it.

Mrs. Battison being dead, I began to fear that you would have no more calls to Bedford; but the marriage so near at hand, of the young lady you mention with a gentleman of that place, gives me hope again that you may occasionally approach us as heretofore, and that on some of those occasions you will perhaps find your way to Weston. The deaths of some and the marriages of others make a new world of it every thirty years. Within that space of time, the majority are displaced, and a new generation has succeeded. Here and there one is permitted to stay a little longer, that there may not be wanting a few grave Dons like myself, to make the observation. This thought struck me very forcibly, the other day, on reading a paper called the County Chronicle, which came hither in the package of some books from London. It contained news from Hertfordshire, and informed me, among other things, that at Great Berkhamstead, the place of my birth, there is hardly a family left of all those with whom, in my early days, I was so familiar. The houses, no doubt, remain, but the inhabitants are only to be found now by their grave-stones; and it is certain that I might pass through a town, in which I was once a sort of principal figure, unknowing and unknown. They are happy who have not taken up their rest in a world fluctuating as the sea, and passing away with the rapidity of a river. I wish to my heart that yourself and Mr. King may long continue, as you have already long continued, exceptions from the general truth of this remark. You doubtless married early, and the thirty-six years elapsed may have yet other years to succeed them. I do not forget that your relation Mrs. Battison lived to the age of eighty-six. I am glad of her longevity, because it seems to afford some assurance of yours; and I hope to know you better yet before you die.

I have never seen the Observer, but am pleased with being handsomely spoken of by an old school-fellow. Cumberland* and I boarded together in the same house at Westminster. He was at that time clever, and I suppose has given proof sufficient to the world that he is still clever: but of all that he has written, it has never fallen in my way to read a syllable, except perhaps in a magazine or review, the sole sources, at present, of all my intelligence. Addison speaks of persons who grow dumb in the study of eloquence, and I have actually studied Homer till I am become a mere ignoramus in every other province of literature.

My letter-writing time is spent, and I must now to Homer. With my best respects to Mr. King, I remain, dear madam,

Most affectionately yours,

W. C.

P. S. When I wrote last, I told you, I believe, that Lady Hesketh was with us. She is with us now, making a cheerful winter for us at Weston. The acquisition of a new friend, and, at a late day, the recovery of the friend of our youth, are two of the chief comforts of which this life is susceptible.

* Author of the "Observer," "the West Indian," and of several dramatic pieces.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

The Lodge, Dec. 9, 1783.

My dear Friend,—That I may return you the Latin manuscript as soon as possible,† I take a short opportunity to scratch a few hasty lines, that it may not arrive alone. I have made here and there an alteration, which appeared to me for the better: but on the whole, I cannot but wonder at your adroitness in a business to which you have been probably at no time much accustomed, and which, for many years, you have not at all practised. If, when you shall have written the whole, you shall wish for a corrector of the rest, so far as my own skill in the matter goes, it is entirely at your service.

Lady Hesketh is obliged to you for the part of your letter in which she is mentioned, and returns her compliments. She loves all my friends, and consequently cannot be indifferent to you. The Throckmortons are gone into Norfolk, on a visit to Lord Petre. They will probably return this day fortnight. Mr. F—— is now preacher at Ravenstone. Mr. C—— still preaches here. The latter is warmly attended. The former has heard him, having, I suppose, a curiosity to know by what charm he held his popularity: but whether he has heard him to his own edification, or not, is more than I can say. Probably he wonders, for I have heard that he is a sensible man. His successful competitor

* Private correspondence.

† We have already alluded to Mr. Van Lier, a Dutch minister of the Reformed Church, to whom the perusal of Mr. Newton's writings was made instrumental in leading his mind to clear and saving impressions of divine truth. He communicated to Mr. Newton an interesting account of this spiritual change of mind, in the Latin manuscript here mentioned, which was transmitted to Cowper, and afterward translated by him, and published by Mr. Newton. It is entitled "The Power of Grace Illustrated," and will be more particularly adverted to in a subsequent part of this book.

is wise in nothing but his knowledge of the gospel.

I am summoned to breakfast, and am, my dear friend, with our best love to Mrs. Newton, Miss Catlett, and yourself,

Most affectionately yours, W. C.

I have not the assurance to call this an answer to your letter, in which were many things deserving much notice; but it is the best that, in the present moment, I am able to send you.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Jan. 13, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I have taken since you went away many of the walks which we have taken together, and none of them, I believe, without thoughts of you. I have, though not a good memory in general, yet a good local memory, and can recollect, by the help of a tree or stile, what you said on that particular spot. For this reason I purpose, when the summer is come, to walk with a book in my pockets: what I read at my fireside I forget, but what I read under a hedge, or at the side of a pond, that pond and that hedge will always bring to my remembrance; and this is a sort of memoria technica, which I would recommend to you, if I did not know that you have no occasion for it.

I am reading Sir John Hawkins, and still hold the same opinion of his book as when you were here.* There are in it undoubtedly some awkwardnesses of phrase, and which is worse, here and there, some unequivocal indications of a vanity not easily pardonable in a man of his years; but on the whole I find it amusing, and to me at least, to whom everything that has passed in the literary world, within these five-and-twenty years, is new, sufficiently replete with information. Mr. Throckmorton told me, about three days since, that it was lately recommended to him by a sensible man, as a book that would give him great insight into the history of modern literature, and modern men of letters, a commendation which I really think it merits. Fifty years hence, perhaps, the world will feel itself obliged to him. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Jan. 24, 1789.

My dear Sir,—We have heard from my cousin in Norfolk-street; she reached home safely, and in good time. An observation suggests itself, which, though I have but little time for observation making, I must allow myself time to mention. Accidents, as we call them, generally occur when there seems least reason to expect them; if a friend of ours travels far in different roads, and at an unfavorable season, we are reasonably alarmed for the safety of one in whom we take so much interest, yet how seldom do we hear a tragical account of such a journey! It is, on the contrary, at home, in our yard, or garden, perhaps in our parlor, that disaster finds us; in any place, in short, where we seem perfectly out of the reach of danger. The lesson inculcated by such a procedure on the part of Providence towards us seems to be that of perpetual dependence.

Having preached this sermon, I must hasten to a close; you know that I am not idle, nor can I afford to be so; I would gladly spend more time with you, but, by some means or other, this day has hitherto proved a day of hindrance and confusion.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 29, 1789.

My dear Friend,—I shall be a better, at least a more frequent correspondent, when I have done with Homer. I am not forgetful of any letters that I owe, and least of all forgetful of my debts in that way to you; on the contrary, I live in a continual state of self-reproach for not writing more punctually; but the old Grecian, whom I charge myself never to neglect, lest I should never finish him, has, at present, a voice that seems to drown all other demands, and many to which I could listen with more pleasure than even to his *Os rotundum*. I am now in the eleventh book of the Odyssey, conversing with the dead. Invoke the muse in my behalf, that I may roll the stone of Sisyphus with some success. To do it as Homer has done it is, I suppose, in our verse and language, impossible; but I will hope not to labor altogether to as little purpose as Sisyphus himself did.

Though I meddle little with politics, and can find but little leisure to do so, the present state of things unavoidably engages a share of my attention. But, as they say, Archimides, when Syracuse was taken, was found busy in the solution of a problem, so, come what may, I shall be found translating Homer.

Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, Jan. 29, 1789.

My dear Madam,—This morning I said to Mrs. Unwin, "I must write to Mrs. King: her long silence alarms me—something has

* Sir John Hawkins is known as the author of four quarto volumes on the general History of Music, and by a Life of Johnson. The former is now superseded by Burney's, and the latter by Boswell's.

* Private correspondence.

happened." These words of mine proved only a prelude to the arrival of your messenger with his most welcome charge, for which I return you my sincerest thanks. You have sent me the very things I wanted, and which I should have continued to want, had not you sent them. As often as the wine is set on the table, I have said to myself, "This is all very well; but I have no bottle-stands;" and myself as often replied, "No matter; you can make shift without them." Thus I and myself have conferred together many a day; and you, as if you had been privy to the conference, have kindly supplied the deficiency, and put an end to the debate forever.

When your messenger arrived, I was beginning to dress for dinner, being engaged to dine with my neighbor, Mr. Throckmorton, from whose house I am just returned, and snatch a few moments before supper to tell you how much I am obliged to you. You will not, therefore, find me very prolix at present; but it shall not be long before you shall hear further from me. Your honest old neighbor sleeps under our roof, and will be gone in the morning before I shall have seen him.

I have more items than one by which to remember the late frost: it has cost me the bitterest uneasiness. Mrs. Unwin got a fall on the gravel-walk covered with ice, which has confined her to an upper chamber ever since. She neither broke nor dislocated any bones; but received such a contusion below the hip, as crippled her completely. She now begins to recover, after having been helpless as a child for a whole fortnight, but so slowly at present, that her amendment is even now almost imperceptible.

Engaged, however, as I am with my own private anxieties, I yet find leisure to interest myself not a little in the distresses of the royal family, especially in those of the Queen.* The Lord-Chancellor called the other morning on Lord Stafford: entering the room, he threw his hat into a sofa at the fireside, and, clasping his hands, said, "I have heard of distress, and I have read of it; but I never saw distress equal to that of the Queen." This I know from particular and certain authority.

My dear madam, I have not time to enlarge at present on this subject, or to touch any other. Once more, therefore, thanking you for your kindness, of which I am truly sensible; and thanking, too, Mr. King for the favor he has done me in subscribing to my Homer, and at the same time begging you to make my best compliments to him, I conclude myself, with Mrs. Unwin's acknowledgments of your most acceptable present to her,

Your obliged and affectionate W. C.

* The unfortunate malady of George III. is here alluded to, which first occurred after a previous indisposition, October 22nd, 1788. The nation was plunged in grief by this calamitous event, and a regency appointed, to the exclusion of the Prince of Wales, which occasioned much discussion in Parliament at that time. Happily the King's illness was only of a few month's duration: his recovery was announced to be complete, Feb. 27, 1789. Few monarchs have been more justly venerated than George the Third, or have left behind them more unquestionable evidences of real personal piety. The following lines written to commemorate his recovery, merit to be recorded.

> Not with more grief did Adam first survey,
> With doubts perplext, the setting orb of day;
> Nor more his joy, th' ensuing morn, to view
> That splendid orb its glorious course renew;
> Than was thy joy, Britannia, and thy pain,
> When set thy sun, and when he rose again.

TO MRS. KING.*

March 12, 1789.

My dear Madam,—I feel myself in no small degree unworthy of the kind solicitude which you express concerning me and my welfare, after a silence so much longer than I gave you reason to expect. I should indeed account myself inexcusable, had I not to allege, in my defence, perpetual engagements of such a kind as would by no means be dispensed with. Had Homer alone been in question, Homer should have made room for you: but I have had other work in hand at the same time, equally pressing and more laborious. Let it suffice to say, that I have not wilfully neglected you for a moment, and that you have never been out of my thoughts a day together. But I begin to perceive that, if a man will be an author, he must live neither to himself nor to his friends so much as to others, whom he never saw, nor shall see.

My promise to follow my last letter with another speedily, which promise I kept so ill, is not the only one which I am conscious of having made to you, and but very indifferently performed. I promised you all the smaller pieces that I should produce, as fast as occasion called them forth, and leisure occurred to write them. Now the fact is, that I have produced several since I made that fair profession, of which I have sent you hardly any. The reason is that, transcribed into the body of a letter, they would leave me no room for prose; and that other conveyance than by the post I cannot find, even after inquiry made among all my neighbors for a traveller to Kimbolton. Well, we shall see you, I hope, in the summer; and then I will show you all. I will transcribe one for you every morning before breakfast, as long as they last; and when you come down, you shall find it laid on your napkin. I sent one last week to London, which, by some kind body or another, I know not whom, is to be presented to the Queen. The subject, as you may guess, is the King's

* Private correspondence.

recovery; a theme that might make a bad poet a good one, and a good one excel himself. This, too, you shall see when we meet, unless it should bounce upon you before, from some periodical register of all such matters.

I shall commission my cousin, who lately left us, to procure for me the book you mention. Being, and having long been, so deep in the business of translation, it was natural that I should have many thoughts on that subject. I have accordingly had as many as would of themselves, perhaps, make a volume, and shall be glad to compare them with those of any other writer recommended by Mr. Martyn. When you write next to that gentleman, I beg you, madam, to present my compliments to him, with thanks both for the mention of Mr. Twining's* book, and for the honor of his name among my subscribers.

I remain always, my dear madam,
Your affectionate W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

The Lodge, April 22, 1789.

My dear Madam,—Having waited hitherto in expectation of the messenger whom, in your last, you mentioned a design to send, I have at length sagaciously surmised that you delay to send him, in expectation of hearing first from me. I would that his errand hither were better worthy the journey. I shall have no very voluminous packet to charge him with when he comes. Such, however, as it is, it is ready; and has received an addition in the interim of one copy, which would not have made a part of it, had your Mercury arrived here sooner. It is on the subject of the Queen's visit to London on the night of the illuminations. Mrs. Unwin, knowing the burden that lies on my back too heavy for any but Atlantean shoulders, has kindly performed the copyist's part, and transcribed all that I had to send you. Observe, madam, I do not write this to hasten your messenger hither, but merely to account for my own silence. It is probable that the later he arrives, the more he will receive when he comes; for I never fail to write when I think I have found a favorable subject.‡

* The author of the translation of Aristotle.
† Private correspondence.
‡ We insert these verses, as expressive of the loyal feelings of Cowper.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON.

The Night of the Tenth of March, 1789.

When, long sequester'd from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign!

Then Loyalty, with all her lamps,
New trimm'd, a gallant show,
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell, of streets, of squares,
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves on high,
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd,
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er design'd,

For no such sight had England's Queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where George recover'd made a scene
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was lov'd by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design—
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before
To veil a deed of thine!

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
Resolved to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
That night except her own.

Arriv'd, a night like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct like the bees,
Had known their sov'reign come.

Pleas'd she beheld aloft portray'd,
On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health and heav'nly aid,
And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,
So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,
The night his city fell.

Soon watery grew her eyes, and dim,
But with a joyful tear!
None else, except in prayer for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like that in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there she knew
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders to her view,
Save love to George alone.

That cordial thought her spirit cheer'd,
And, through the cumb'rous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And, fearless of the billowy scene,
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She viewed the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice!
Heaven grant us no such future sight—
Such precious woe the price!

We mourn that we must give up the hope of seeing you and Mr. King at Weston. Had our correspondence commenced sooner, we had certainly found the means of meeting; but it seems that we were doomed to

know each other too late for a meeting in this world. May a better world make us amends, as it certainly will, if I ever reach a better! Our interviews here are but imperfect pleasures at the best; and generally from such as promise us most gratification we receive the most disappointment. But disappointment is, I suppose, confined to the planet on which we dwell, the only one in the universe, probably, that is inhabited by sinners.

I did not know, or even suspect, that when I received your last messenger, I received so eminent a disciple of Hippocrates; a physician of such absolute control over disease and the human constitution, as to be able to put a pestilence into his pocket, confine it there, and let it loose at his pleasure. We are much indebted to him that he did not give us here a stroke of his ability.

I must not forget to mention that I have received (probably not without your privity) Mr. Twining's valuable volume.* For a long time I supposed it to have come from my bookseller, who now and then sends me a new publication: but I find, on inquiry, that it came not from him. I beg, madam, if you are aware that Mr. Twining himself sent it, or your friend Mr. Martyn, that you will negotiate for me on the occasion, and contrive to convey to the obliging donor my very warmest thanks. I am impatient till he receives them. I have not yet had time to do justice to a writer so sensible, elegant, and entertaining, by a complete perusal of his work; but I have with pleasure sought out all those passages to which Mr. Martyn was so good as to refer me, and am delighted to observe the exact agreement in opinion on the subject of translation in general, and on that of Mr. Pope's in particular, that subsists between Mr. Twining and myself.

With Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, I remain, my dear madam,

Your obliged and affectionate, W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

April 30, 1789.

My dear Madam,—I thought to have sent you, by the return of your messenger, a letter; at least, something like one: but instead of sleeping here, as I supposed he would, he purposes to pass the night at Lavendon, a village three miles off. This design of his is but just made known to me, and it is now near seven in the evening. Therefore, lest he should be obliged to feel out his way, in an unknown country, in the dark, I am forced to scribble a hasty word or two, instead of devoting, as I intended, the whole evening to your service.

* The translation of Aristotle.
† Private correspondence.

A thousand thanks for your basket, and all the good things that it contained; particularly for my brother's Poems,* whose hand-writing struck me the moment I saw it. They gave me some feelings of a melancholy kind, but not painful. I will return them to you by the next opportunity. I wish that mine, which I send you, may prove half as pleasant to you as your excellent cakes and apples have proved to us. You will then think yourselves sufficiently recompensed for your obliging present. If a crab-stock can transform a pippin into a nonpareil, what may not I effect in a translation of Homer? Alas! I fear nothing half so valuable.

I have learned, at length, that I am indebted for Twining's Aristotle to a relation of mine, General Cowper.

Pardon me that I quit you so soon. It is not willingly; but I have compassion on your poor messenger.

Adieu, my dear madam, and believe me,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, May 20, 1789.

My dear Sir,—Finding myself, between twelve and one, at the end of the seventeenth book of the Odyssey, I give the interval between the present moment and the time of walking, to you. If I write letters before I sit down to Homer, I feel my spirits too flat for poetry, and too flat for letter-writing if I address myself to Homer first; but the last I choose as the least evil, because my friends will pardon my dullness, but the public will not.

I had been some days uneasy on your account when yours arrived. We should have rejoiced to have seen you, would your engagements have permitted; but in the autumn, I hope, if not before, we shall have the pleasure to receive you. At what time we may expect Lady Hesketh, at present, I know not; but imagine that at any time after the month of June you will be sure to find her with us, which I mention, knowing that to meet you would add a relish to all the pleasures she can find at Weston.

When I wrote these lines on the Queen's visit, I thought I had performed well; but it belongs to me, as I have told you before, to dislike whatever I write when it has been written a month. The performance was therefore sinking in my esteem, when your approbation of it, arriving in good time, buoyed it up again. It will now keep possession of the place it holds in my good opinion, because it has been favored with yours; and a copy will certainly be at your service whenever you choose to have one.

* We regret that we have not succeeded in procuring any traces of these poems of Cowper's brother.

Nothing is more certain than that when I wrote the line,

God made the country, and man made the town,

I had not the least recollection of that very similar one, which you quote from Hawkins Brown. It convinces me that critics (and none more than Warton, in his notes on Milton's minor poems) have often charged authors with borrowing what they drew from their own fund. Brown was an entertaining companion when he had drunk his bottle, but not before: this proved a snare to him, and he would sometimes drink too much; but I know not that he was chargeable with any other irregularities. He had those among his intimates, who would not have been such had he been otherwise viciously inclined; the Duncombs, in particular, father and son, who were of unblemished morals. W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, May 30, 1789.

Dearest Madam,—Many thanks for your kind and valuable despatches, none of which, except your letter, I have yet had time to read; for true it is, and a sad truth too, that I was in bed when your messenger arrived. He waits only for my answer, for which reason I answer as speedily as I can.

I am glad if my poetical packet pleased you. Those stanzas on the Queen's visit were presented some time since, by Miss Goldsworthy,† to the princess Augusta, who has probably given them to the Queen; but of their reception I have heard nothing. I gratified myself by complimenting two sovereigns whom I love and honor; and that gratification will be my reward. It would, indeed, be unreasonable to expect that persons who keep a Laureat in constant pay, should have either praise or emolument to spare for every volunteer who may choose to make them his subject.

I will take the greatest care of the papers with which you have entrusted me, and will return them by the next opportunity. It is very unfortunate that the people of Bedford should choose to have the small-pox, just at the season when it would be sure to prevent our meeting. God only knows, madam, when we shall meet, or whether at all in this world; but certain it is, that whether we meet or not,

I am most truly yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, June 5, 1789.

My dear Friend,—I am going to give you a deal of trouble, but London folks must be content to be troubled by country folks; for in London only can our strange necessities be supplied. You must buy for me, if you please, a cuckoo clock; and now I will tell you where they are sold, which, Londoner as you are, it is possible you may not know. They are sold, I am informed, at more houses than one in that narrow part of Holborn which leads into Broad St. Giles'. It seems they are well-going clocks and cheap, which are the two best recommendations of any clock. They are made in Germany, and such numbers of them are annually imported, that they are become even a considerable article of commerce.

I return you many thanks for Boswell's Tour.* I read it to Mrs. Unwin after supper, and we find it amusing. There is much trash in it, as there must always be in every narrative that relates indiscriminately all that passed. But now and then the Doctor speaks like an oracle, and that makes amends for all. Sir John was a coxcomb, and Boswell is not less a coxcomb, though of another kind. I fancy Johnson made coxcombs of all his friends, and they in return made him a coxcomb; for, with reverence be it spoken, such he certainly was, and flattered as he was he was sure to be so.

Thanks for your invitation to London, but unless London can come to me, I fear we shall never meet. I was sure that you would love my friend when you should once be well acquainted with him,† and equally sure that he would take kindly to you.

Now for Homer. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, June 16, 1789.

My dear Friend,—You will naturally suppose that the letter in which you announced your marriage occasioned me some concern, though in my answer I had the wisdom to conceal it. The account you gave me of the object of your choice was such as left me at liberty to form conjectures not very comfortable to myself, if my friendship for you were indeed sincere. I have since, however, been sufficiently consoled. Your brother Chester has informed me that you have married not only one of the most agreeable, but one of the most accomplished, women in the kingdom. It is an old maxim, that it is better to exceed expectation than to disappoint it; and with this maxim in your view it was, no doubt, that you dwelt only on circumstances of disadvantage, and would not treat me with a recital of others which abundantly overweigh them. I now congratulate not you only but myself, and truly rejoice that my friend has chosen for his fellow-traveller, through the re-

* Private correspondence.
† The daughter of General Goldsworthy.

* Tour to the Hebrides.
† Rev. John Newton

maining stages of his journey, a companion who will do honor to his discernment, and make his way, so far as it can depend on a wife to do so, pleasant to the last.

My verses on the Queen's visit to London either have been printed, or soon will be, in the "World." The finishing to which you objected I have altered, and have substituted two new stanzas instead of it. Two others also I have struck out, another critic having objected to *them*. I think I am a very tractable sort of a poet. Most of my fraternity would as soon shorten the noses of their children because they were said to be too long, as thus dock their compositions in compliance with the opinions of others. I beg that when my life shall be written hereafter, my authorship's ductibility of temper may not be forgotten.

I am, my dear friend,
Ever yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, June 29, 1789.

Amico Mio,—I am truly sorry that it must be so long before we can have an opportunity to meet. My cousin in her last letter but one inspired me with other expectations, expressing a purpose, if the matter could be so contrived, of bringing you with her: I was willing to believe that you had consulted together on the subject, and found it feasible. A month was formerly a trifle in my account, but at my present age I give it all its importance, and grudge that so many months should yet pass in which I have not even a glimpse of those I love, and of whom, the course of nature considered, I must ere long take leave forever—but I shall live till August.

Many thanks for the cuckoo which arrived perfectly safe and goes well, to the amusement and amazement of all who hear it. Hannah lies awake to hear it, and I am not sure that we have not others in the house that admire his music as much as she.

Having read both Hawkins and Boswell, I now think myself as much a master of Johnson's character as if I had known him personally, and cannot but regret *that our bards of other times* found no such biographers as these. They have both been ridiculed, and the wits have had their laugh; but such a history of Milton or Shakspeare as they have given of Johnson—O how desirable!*

W. C.

* The distinguished merit of Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson is precisely what Cowper here states. In perusing it we become intimately acquainted with his manner, habits of life, and sentiments on every subject. We are introduced to the great wits of the age, and see a lively portraiture of the literary characters of those times. However minute and even frivolous some of the remarks may be, yet Boswell's Life will never fail to awaken interest, and no library can be considered to be complete without it.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

July 18, 1789.

Many thanks, my dear madam, for your extract from George's letter. I retain but little Italian, yet that little was so forcibly mustered by the consciousness that I was myself the subject, that I presently became master of it. I have always said that George is a poet, and I am never in his company but I discover proofs of it, and the delicate address by which he has managed his complimentary mention of me convinces me of it still more than ever. Here are a thousand poets of us who have impudence enough to write for the public; but amongst the modest men who are by diffidence restrained from such an enterprise are those who would eclipse us all. I wish that George would make the experiment, I would bind on his laurels with my own hand.*

Your gardener has gone after his wife, but, having neglected to take his lyre, *alias* fiddle, with him, has not brought home his Eurydice. Your clock in the hall has stopped, and (strange to tell!) it stopped at sight of the watchmaker: for he only looked at it, and it has been motionless ever since. Mr. Gregson is gone, and the Hall is a desolation. Pray don't think any place pleasant that you may find in your rambles, that we may see you the sooner. Your aviary is all in good health; I pass it every day, and often inquire at the lattice; the inhabitants of it send their duty, and wish for your return. I took notice of the inscription on your seal, and had we an artist here capable of furnishing me with another, you should read on mine, "*Encore une lettre.*"

Adieu! W. C.

The importance of improving the early hours of life, which, once lost, are never recovered, is profitably enforced in the succeeding letter.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, July 23, 1789.

You do well, my dear sir, to improve your opportunity; to speak in the rural phrase, this is your sowing time, and the sheaves you look for can never be yours unless you make that use of it. The color of our whole

"Homer," says a popular critic, "is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets—Shakspeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists—Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers."

"A book," observes Mr. Croker, "to which the world refers as a manual of amusement, a repository of wit, wisdom, and morals, and a lively and faithful history of the manners and literature of England, during a period hardly second in brilliancy, and superior in importance even to the Augustan age of Anne.

* This truly amiable and accomplished person afterwards became Sir George Throckmorton, Bart.

life is generally such as the three or four first years in which we are our own masters make it. Then it is that we may be said to shape our own destiny, and to treasure up for ourselves a series of future successes or disappointments. Had I employed my time as wisely as you, in a situation very similar to yours, I had never been a poet perhaps; but I might by this time have acquired a character of more importance in society, and a situation in which my friends would have been better pleased to see me. But three years misspent in an attorney's office, were almost of course followed by several more equally misspent in the Temple, and the consequence has been, as the Italian epitaph says, "*Sto qui.*" The only use I can make of myself now, at least the best, is to serve *in terrorem* to others, when occasion may happen to offer, that they may escape (so far as my admonitions can have any weight with them) my folly and my fate. When you feel yourself tempted to relax a little of the strictness of your present discipline, and to indulge in amusement incompatible with your future interests, think on your friend at Weston.

Having said this, I shall next, with my whole heart, invite you hither, and assure you that I look forward to approaching August with great pleasure, because it promises me your company. After a little time (which we shall wish longer) spent with us, you will return invigorated to your studies, and pursue them with more advantage. In the meantime, you have lost little, in point of season, by being confined to London. Incessant rains and meadows under water have given to the summer the air of winter, and the country has been deprived of half its beauties.

It is time to tell you that we are all well, and often make you our subject. This is the third meeting that my cousin and we have had in this country, and a great instance of good fortune I account it in such a world as this to have expected such a pleasure thrice, without being once disappointed. Add to this wonder as soon as you can by making yourself of the party.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

August 1, 1789.

My dear Madam,—The post brings me no letters that do not grumble at my silence. Had not you, therefore, taken me to task as roundly as others, I should have concluded you perhaps more indifferent to my epistles than the rest of my correspondents; of whom one says,—"I shall be glad when you have finished Homer; then possibly you will find a little leisure for an old friend." Another says—"I don't choose to be neglected, unless you equally neglect every one else." Thus I hear of it with both ears, and shall, till I appear in the shape of two great quarto volumes, the composition of which, I confess, engrosses me to a degree that gives my friends, to whom I feel myself much obliged for their anxiety to hear from me, but too much reason to complain. Johnson told Mr. Martyn the truth, but your inference from that truth is not altogether so just as most of your conclusions are. Instead of finding myself the more at leisure because my long labor draws to a close, I find myself the more occupied. As when a horse approaches the goal, he does not, unless he be jaded, slacken his pace, but quickens it; even so it fares with me. The end is in view; I seem almost to have reached the mark, and the nearness of it inspires me with fresh alacrity. But, be it known to you, that I have still two books of the Odyssey before me, and when they are finished, shall have almost the whole eight-and-forty to revise. Judge then, my dear madam, if it is yet time for me to play, or to gratify myself with scribbling to those I love. No: it is still necessary that waking I should be all absorbed in Homer, and that sleeping I should dream of nothing else.

I am a great lover of good paintings, but no connoisseur, having never had an opportunity to become one. In the last forty years of my life, I have hardly seen six pictures that were worth looking at; for I was never a frequenter of auctions, having never had any spare money in my pocket, and the public exhibitions of them in London had hardly taken place when I left it. My cousin, who is with us, saw the gentleman whose pieces you mention, on the top of a scaffold, copying a famous picture in the Vatican. She has seen some of his performances, and much admires them.

You have had a great loss, and a loss that admits of no consolation, except such as will naturally suggest itself to *you*, such, I mean, as the Scripture furnishes. We must all leave, or be left; and it is the circumstance of all others that makes a long life the least desirable, that others go while we stay, till at last we find ourselves alone, like a tree on a hill-top.

Accept, my dear madam, mine and Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to yourself and Mr. King, and believe me, however unfrequent in telling you that I am so,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, August 8, 1789.

My dear Friend,—Come when you will, or when you can, you cannot come at a wrong

* Private correspondence.

time; but we shall expect you on the day mentioned.

If you have any book that you think will make pleasant evening reading, bring it with you. I now read Mrs. Piozzi's* Travels to the ladies after supper, and shall probably have finished them before we shall have the pleasure of seeing you. It is the fashion, I understand, to condemn them. But we, who make books ourselves, are more merciful to book-makers. I would that every fastidious judge of authors were himself obliged to write: there goes more to the composition of a volume than many critics imagine.† I have often wondered that the same poet who wrote the "Dunciad," should have written these lines,

> The mercy I to others show,
> That mercy show to me.

Alas! for Pope, if the mercy he showed to others, was the measure of mercy he received! He was the less pardonable, too, because experienced in all the difficulties of composition.

I scratch this between dinner and tea: a time when I cannot write much without disordering my noddle and bringing a flush into my face. You will excuse me therefore, if, through respect for the two important considerations of health and beauty, I conclude myself,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.‡

August 12, 1789.

My dear Friend,—I rejoice that you and Mrs. Hill are so agreeably occupied in your retreat.§ August, I hope, will make us amends for the gloom of its many wintry predecessors. We are now gathering from our meadows, not hay, but muck; such stuff as deserves not the carriage, which yet it must have, that the after-crop may have leave to grow. The Ouse has hardly deigned to run in his channel since the summer began.

My Muse were a vixen if she were not always ready to fly in obedience to your commands. But what can be done? I can write nothing in the few hours that remain to me of this day that will be fit for your purpose, and unless I could dispatch what I write by to-morrow's post, it would not reach you in time. I must add, too, that my friend, the vicar of the next parish,* engaged me, the day before yesterday, to furnish him by next Sunday with a hymn, to be sung on the occasion of his preaching to the children of the Sunday-school:† of which hymn I have not yet produced a syllable. I am somewhat in the case of lawyer Dowling, in "Tom Jones;" and could I split myself into as many poets as there are muses, could find employment for them all.

Adieu, my dear friend.

I am ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.‡

August 16, 1789.

My dear Friend,—Mrs. Newton and you are both kind and just in believing that I do not love you less when I am long silent. Perhaps a friend of mine, who wishes me to have him always in my thoughts, is never so effectually possessed of the accomplishment of that wish as when I have been long his debtor; for *then* I think of him not only every day, but day and night, and all day long. But I confess at the same time that my thoughts of you will be more pleasant to myself when I shall have exonerated my conscience by giving you the letter so long your due. Therefore, here it comes: little worth your having, but payment, such as it is, that you have a right to expect, and that is essential to my own tranquillity.

That the Iliad and the Odyssey should have proved the occasion of my suspending my correspondence with you, is a proof how little we foresee the consequences of what we publish. Homer, I dare say, hardly at all suspected that at the fag-end of time two personages would appear, the one yeleped Sir Newton and the other Sir Cowper, who, loving each other heartily, would nevertheless suffer the pains of an interrupted intercourse,

* Formerly Mrs. Thrale, the well-known friend of Dr. Johnson, and resident at Streatham. Her second marriage was considered to be imprudent. She wrote Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson, and was also the authoress of the beautiful tale entitled, "The Three Warnings," beginning,

> "The tree of deepest root is found
> Unwilling most to leave the ground," &c. &c.

† It cost Lord Lyttleton twenty years to write the Life and History of Henry II. The historian Gibbon was twelve years in completing his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and Adam Smith occupied ten years in producing his "Wealth of Nations."

A stronger instance can scarcely be quoted of the mental labor employed in the composition of a work, than what is recorded of Boileau, who occupied eleven months in writing his "Equivoque," consisting only of 346 lines, and afterwards spent three years in revising it.

Cowper sometimes wrote only five or six lines in a day.

‡ Private correspondence.

§ At Wargrave, near Henley-on-Thames.

* Olney.

† We subjoin an extract from this Sunday-school hymn, for the benefit of our younger readers.

> "Hear, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
> In heaven, thy dwelling-place,
> From infants, made the public care,
> And taught to seek thy face!
>
> "Thanks for thy word, and for thy day;
> And grant us, we implore,
> Never to waste in sinful play
> Thy holy Sabbaths more.
>
> "Thanks that we hear—but, oh! impart
> To each desires sincere,
> That we may listen with our heart,
> And learn, as well as hear."

‡ Private correspondence.

his poems the cause. So, however, it has happened; and though it would not, I suppose, extort from the old bard a single sigh, if he knew it, yet to me it suggests the serious reflection above-mentioned. *An author by profession had need narrowly to watch his pen, lest a line should escape it which by possibility may do mischief, when he has been long dead and buried.* What we have done, when we have written a book, will never be known till the day of judgment: then the account will be liquidated, and all the good that it has occasioned, and all the evil, will witness either for or against us.

I am now in the last book of the Odyssey, yet have still, I suppose, half a year's work before me. The accurate revisal of two such voluminous poems can hardly cost me less. I rejoice, however, that the goal is in prospect: for, though it has cost me years to run this race, it is only now that I begin to have a glimpse of it. That I shall never receive any proportionable pecuniary recompense for my long labors is pretty certain; and as to any fame that I may possibly gain by it, *that* is a commodity that daily sinks in value, in measure as the consummation of all things approaches. In the day when the lion shall dandle the kid, and a little child shall lead them, the world will have lost all relish for the fabulous legends of antiquity, and Homer and his translator may budge off the stage together.

Ever yours, W. C.

Cowper's remarks on the subject of authors, in the above letter, are truly impressive and demand attention. If it indeed be true, that authors are responsible for their writings, as well as for their personal conduct, (of which we presume there can be no reasonable doubt,) how would the tone of literature be raised, and the pen often be arrested in its course, if this conviction were fully realized to the conscience! Their writings are, in fact, the record of the operations of their minds, and are destined to survive, so far as metallic types and literary talent can ensure durability and success. Nor is it less true that the character of a nation will generally be moulded by the spirit of its authors. Allowing, therefore, the extent of this powerful influence, we can conceive the possibility of authors, at the last great day, undergoing the ordeal of a solemn judicial inquiry, when the subject for investigation will be, how far their writings have enlarged the bounds of useful knowledge, or subserved the cause of piety and truth. If, instead of those great ends being answered, it shall appear that the foundations of religion have been undermined, the cause of virtue weakened, and the heart made more accessible to error; if, too, a dread array of witnesses shall stand forth, tracing the guilt of their lives and the ruin of their hopes to the fatal influence of the books which they had read, what image of horror can equal the sensation of such a moment, save the despair of hearing the irrevocable sentence, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you!"

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 21, 1789.

My dear Friend,—You left us exactly at the wrong time; had you stayed till now, you would have had the pleasure of hearing even my cousin say—"I am cold,"—and the still greater pleasure of being warm yourself; for I have had a fire in the study ever since you went. It is the fault of our summers that they are hardly ever warm or cold enough. Were they warmer we should not want a fire, and were they colder we should have one.

I have twice seen and conversed with Mr. J——; he is witty, intelligent, and agreeable beyond the common measure of men who are so. But it is the constant effect of a spirit of party to make those hateful to each other who are truly amiable in themselves.

Beau sends his love; he was melancholy the whole day after your departure.

W. C.

The power of poetry to embellish the most simple incident is pleasingly evinced in the following letter, by the Homeric muse of Cowper.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 4, 1789.

My dear Friend,—The hamper is come, and come safe; and the contents I can affirm, on my own knowledge, are excellent. It chanced that another hamper and box came by the same conveyance, all which I unpacked and expounded in the hall, my cousin sitting meantime on the stairs, spectatress of the business. We diverted ourselves with imagining the manner in which Homer would have described the scene. Detailed in his circumstantial way, it would have furnished materials for a paragraph of considerable length in an Odyssey.

The straw-stuff'd hamper with his ruthless steel
He open'd, cutting sheer th' inserted cords,
Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came
The rustling package first, bright straw of wheat
Or oats or barley; next a bottle green
Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distill'd
Drop after drop odorous, by the art
Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

And so on.

I should rejoice to be the hero of such a tale in the hands of Homer.

You will remember, I trust, that, when the state of your health or spirits calls for rural walks and fresh air, you have always a retreat at Weston.

We are all well; all love you, down to the very dog: and shall be glad to hear that you have exchanged languor for alacrity, and the debility that you mention for indefatigable vigor.

Mr. Throckmorton has made me a handsome present; Villoison's edition of the Iliad, elegantly bound by Edwards.* If I live long enough, by the contributions of my friends I shall once more be possessed of a library.

Adieu! W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

My dear Walter,—I know that you are too reasonable a man to expect anything like punctuality of correspondence from a translater of Homer, especially from one who is a doer also of many other things at the same time; for I labor hard not only to acquire a little fame for myself, but to win it also for others, men of whom I know nothing, not even their names, who send me their poetry, that by translating it out of prose into verse, I may make it more like poetry than it was. Having heard all this, you will feel yourself not only inclined to pardon my long silence, but to pity me also for the cause of it. You may if you please believe likewise, for it is true, that I have a faculty of remembering my friends even when I do not write to them, and of loving them not one jot the less, though I leave them to starve for want of a letter from me. And now I think you have an apology both as to style, matter, and manner, altogether unexceptionable.

Why is the winter like a backbiter? Because Solomon says that a backbiter separates between chief friends, and so does the winter; to this dirty season it is owing that I see nothing of the valuable Chesters, whom indeed I see less at all times than serves at all to content me. I hear of them indeed occasionally from my neighbors at the Hall, but even of that comfort I have lately enjoyed less than usual, Mr. Throckmorton having been hindered by his first fit of the gout from his usual visits to Chicheley. The gout however has not prevented his making me a handsome present of a folio edition of the Iliad, published about a year since at Venice, by a literato, who calls himself Villoison. It is possible that you have seen it, and that if you have it not yourself, it has at least found its way to Lord Bagot's library. If neither should be the case, when I write next (for sooner or later I shall certainly write to you again if I live) I will send you some pretty stories out of his Prolegomena, which will make your hair stand on end, as mine has stood on end already, they so horribly affect, in point of authenticity, the credit of the works of the immortal Homer.

Wishing you and Mrs. Bagot all the happiness that a new year can possibly bring with it, I remain, with Mrs. Unwin's best respects, yours, my dear friend, with all sincerity, W. C.

My paper mourns for the death of Lord Cowper, my valuable cousin, and much my benefactor.

* The character of this work is given by Cowper himself in a subsequent letter to his friend Walter Bagot.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

My dear Friend,—I am a terrible creature for not writing sooner, but the old excuse must serve; at least I will not occupy paper with the addition of others unless you should insist on it, in which case I can assure you that I have them ready. Now to business.

From Villoison I learn that it was the avowed opinion and persuasion of Callimachus (whose hymns we both studied at Westminster) that Homer was very imperfectly understood even in *his* day; that his admirers, deceived by the perspicuity of his style, fancied themselves masters of his meaning, when in truth they knew little about it.

Now we know that Callimachus, as I have hinted, was himself a poet, and a good one; he was also esteemed a good critic; he almost, if not actually, adored Homer, and imitated him as nearly as he could.

What shall we say to this? I will tell you what I say to it. Callimachus meant, and he could mean nothing more by this assertion, than that the poems of Homer were in fact an allegory; that under the obvious import of his stories lay concealed a mystic sense, sometimes philosophical, sometimes religious, sometimes moral; and that the generality either wanted penetration or industry, or had not been properly qualified by their studies to discover it. This I can readily believe, for I am myself an ignoramus in these points, and, except here and there, discern nothing more than the letter. But if Callimachus will tell me that even of *that* I am ignorant, I hope soon by two great volumes to convince him of the contrary.

I learn also from the same Villoison, that Pisistratus, who was a sort of Mæcenas in Athens, where he gave great encouragement to literature, and built and furnished a public library, regretting that there was no complete copy of Homer's works in the world, resolved to make one. For this purpose, he advertised rewards in all the newspapers to those, who, being possessed *memoriter* of any part or parcel of the poems of that bard, would resort

to his house, and repeat them to his secretaries, that they might write them. Now, it happened that more were desirous of the reward than qualified to deserve it. The consequence was, that the non-qualified persons, having many of them a pretty knack at versification, imposed on the generous Athenian most egregiously, giving him, instead of Homer's verses, which they had not to give, verses of their own invention. He, good creature, suspecting no such fraud, took them all for gospel, and entered them into his volume accordingly.

Now, let *him* believe the story who can. That Homer's works were in this manner corrected, I *can* believe; but, that a learned Athenian could be so imposed upon, with sufficient means of detection at hand, I *cannot*. Would he not be on his guard? Would not a difference of style and manner have occurred? Would not that difference have excited a suspicion? Would not that suspicion have led to inquiry, and would not that inquiry have issued in detection? For how easy was it in the multitude of Homer-conners to find two, ten, twenty, possessed of the questionable passage, and, by confronting him with the impudent impostor, to convict him. *Abeas ergo in malam rem cum istis tuis hallucinationibus, Villoisone!**

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston, Dec. 1, 1789.

My dear Friend,—On this fine first of December, under an unclouded sky, and in a room full of sunshine, I address myself to the payment of a debt long in arrear, but never forgotten by me, however I may have seemed to forget it. I will not waste time in apologies. I have but one, and that one will suggest itself unmentioned. I will only add, that you are the first to whom I write, of several to whom I have not written many months, who all have claims upon me; and who, I flatter myself, are all grumbling at my silence. In your case, perhaps, I have been less anxious than in the case of some others; because, if you have not heard from myself, you have heard from Mrs. Unwin. From her you have learned that I live, that I am as well as usual, and that I translate Homer:—three short items, but in which is comprised the whole detail of my present history. Thus I fared when you were here; thus I have fared ever since you were here; and thus, if it please God, I shall continue to fare for some time longer: for, though the work is done, it is not finished: a riddle which you, who are a brother of the press, will solve easily.* I have also been the less anxious, because I have had frequent opportunities to hear of you; and have always heard that you are in good health and happy. Of Mrs. Newton, too, I have heard more favorable accounts of late, which have given us both the sincerest pleasure. Mrs. Unwin's case is, at present, my only subject of uneasiness, that is not immediately personal, and properly my own. She has almost constant headaches; almost a constant pain in her side, which nobody understands; and her lameness, within the last half year, is very little amended. But her spirits are good, because supported by comforts which depend not on the state of the body; and I do not know that, with all these pains, her looks are at all altered since we had the happiness to see you here, unless, perhaps, they are altered a little for the better. I have thus given you as circumstantial an account of ourselves as I could; the most interesting matter, I verily believe, with which I could have filled my paper, unless I could have made spiritual mercies to myself the subject. In my next, perhaps, I shall find leisure to bestow a few lines on what is doing in France, and in the Austrian Netherlands:† though, to say the truth, I am much better qualified to write an essay on the siege of Troy than to descant on any of these modern revolutions. I question if, in either of the countries just mentioned, full of bustle and tumult as they are, there be a single character whom Homer, were he living, would deign to make his hero. The populace are the heroes now, and the stuff of which gentlemen heroes are made seems to be all expended.

I will endeavor that my next letter shall not follow this so tardily as this has followed the last; and, with our joint affectionate remembrances to yourself and Mrs. Newton, remain as ever,

Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 18, 1789.

My dear Friend,—The present appears to

* The reveries of learned men are amusing, but injurious to true taste and sound literature. Bishop Warburton's labored attempt to prove that the descent of Æneas into hell in the 6th book of the Æneid, is intended to convey a representation of the Eleusinian mysteries, is of this description; when it is obviously an imitation of a similar event, recorded of Ulysses. Genius should guard against a fondness for speculative discursion, which often leads from the simplicity of truth to the establishment of dangerous errors. We consider speculative inquiries to form one of the features of the present times, against which we have need to be vigilantly on our guard. † Private correspondence.

* Revision is no small part of the literary labors of an author.

† The French revolution, that great event which exercised so powerful an influence not only on European governments but on the world at large, and the effects of which are experienced at the present moment, had just commenced. The Austrian Netherlands had also revolted, and Brussels and most of the principal towns and cities were in the hands of the insurgents.

me a wonderful period in the history of mankind. That nations so long contentedly slaves should on a sudden become enamored of liberty, and understand as suddenly their own natural right to it, feeling themselves at the same time inspired with resolution to assert it, seems difficult to account for from natural causes. With respect to the final issue of all this, I can only say that if, having discovered the value of liberty, they should next discover the value of peace, and lastly the value of the word of God, they will be happier than they ever were since the rebellion of the first pair, and as happy as it is possible they should be in the present life.

Most sincerely yours, W. C.

The French revolution, to which we have now been led by the correspondence of Cowper, whether we consider its immediate or ultimate consequences, was one of the most extraordinary events recorded in the history of modern Europe. It fixed the contemplation of the politician, the philosopher, and the moralist. By the first, it was viewed according to the political bias which marks the two great divisions of party established in this country. Mr. Fox designated it as one of the noblest fabrics ever erected by human liberty for the happiness of mankind. Mr. Burke asserted that it was a system of demolition, and not of reparation. The French revolution might possibly have merited the eulogium of Mr. Fox, if its promoters had known when to pause, or how to regulate its progress. But unhappily the spirit of democracy was let loose, and those who first engaged in the work (influenced no doubt by the purest motives) were obliged to give way to men of more turbulent passions; demagogues, who were willing to go all lengths; who had nothing to lose, and everything to gain; and in whose eyes moderation was a crime, and the fear of spoliation and carnage an act of ignoble timidity. Contending factions succeeded each other like the waves of the sea, and were borne along with the same irresistible power, till their fury was spent and exhausted.

The sequel is well known. Property was confiscated. Whatever was venerable in virtue, splendid in rank, or sacred in religion, became the object of popular violence. The throne and the altar were overturned; and an amiable and inoffensive monarch, whose only crime was the title that he sustained, was led in triumph to the scaffold, amidst the acclamations of his people: and, as if to make death more terrible, the place selected for his execution was in view of the very palace which had been the scene of his former greatness.*

* Hæc finis Priami fatorum; hic exitus illum
Sorte tulit, Trojam incensam et prolapsa videntem

The features which distinguished the revolution in France from that of England in 1688 are thus finely drawn by Mr. Burke.

"In truth, the circumstances of our revolution (as it is called) and that of France are just the reverse of each other in almost every particular, and in the whole spirit of the transaction. With us it was the case of a legal monarch attempting arbitrary power. In France it is the case of an arbitrary monarch, beginning, from whatever cause, to legalize his authority. The one was to be resisted, the other was to be managed and directed; but in neither case was the order of the state to be changed, lest government might be ruined, which ought only to be corrected and legalized.

"What we did was, in truth and substance, and in a constitutional light, *a revolution, not made, but prevented.* We took solid securities; we settled doubtful questions; we corrected anomalies in our law. In the stable, fundamental parts of our constitution we made no revolution; no, nor any alteration at all. We did not impair the monarchy.

"The nation kept the same ranks, the same orders, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property, the same subordinations, the same order in the law, in the revenue, and in the magistracy: the same lords, the same commons, the same corporations, the same electors."*

That we should have been so graciously preserved in such a period of political convulsions, will ever demand our gratitude and praise. We owe it not to our arms, or to our councils, but to the goodness and mercy of God. We heard the loud echo of the thunder, and the howlings of the storm. We even felt some portion of the heavings of the earthquake; but we were spared from falling into the abyss; we survived the ruin and desolations. We trust we shall still be preserved, by the same superintending Providence, and that we may say, in the language of Burke,—

"We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers."

But, if history be philosophy teaching by example, what, we may ask, were the political and moral causes of that extraordinary convulsion in France, of which we are speaking? They are to be traced to that spirit of ambition and conquest, which, however splendid in military prowess, ultimately exhausted the resources of the state, and oppressed the people with imposts and taxation. They are

Pergama; tot quondam populis, terrisque, superbum
Regnatorem Asiæ. Jacet ingens littore truncus,
Avulsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus.

* Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France.

to be found in the system of peculation and extravagance that pervaded every department of the government; in the profligacy of the court; in the luxurious pomp and pride of the noblesse; and in the universal corruption that infected the whole mass of society. To the above may be added, the zeal with which infidel principles were propagated, and the systematic attempts to undermine the whole fabric of civil society through the agency of the press. The press became impious towards God, and disloyal towards kings; and unfortunately the church and the state, being enfeebled by corruption, opposed an ineffectual resistance. Religion had lost its hold on the public mind. Men were required to believe too much, and believed nothing. The consequences were inevitable. When men have once cast off the fear of God, it is an easy transition to forget reverence to the authority of kings, and obedience to the majesty of law. It is curious to observe how the effects of this antisocial conspiracy were distinctly foreseen and predicted. "I hold it impossible," said Rousseau, "that the great monarchies of Europe can subsist much longer." "The high may be reduced low, and the rich become poor, and even the monarch dwindle into a subject."* The train was laid, the match alone was wanting to produce the explosion.

The occasion was at length presented. The immediate cause of the French revolution† must be sought in the plains of America. When, Great Britain was involved with her American colonies, France ungraciously interposed in the quarrel. She paid the price of her interference in a manner that she little anticipated. The Marquis de la Fayette *there* first acquired his ardor for the cause of liberty; and, crossing the Atlantic, carried back with him the spirit into France, and in a short time lighted up a flame which has since spread so great a conflagration.

But whence sprung the revolution in America?

To solve this momentous question, we must overlook the more immediate causes, and extend our inquiry to the political and religious discussions of the times of James I. and Charles I. and II. It is in that unfortunate period of polemical controversy and excitement, that the foundation of events was laid which have not even yet spent their strength: and that the philosophical inquirer, whose sole object is the attainment of truth, will find it.

The Puritans proposed to carry forth the principle of the Reformation to a still further extent. The proposition was rejected, their views were impugned, and the freedom of religious inquiry was impeded by vexatious obstructions. They found no asylum at home; they sought it abroad, and on the American continent planted the standard of civil and religious liberty. The times of Charles I. followed. There was the same spirit, and the same results. The Star Chamber and the High Commission Court supplied new victims to swell the tide of angry feeling beyond the Atlantic. It was persecution that first peopled America. Time alone was wanting to mature the fruits. The reign of Charles II. completed the eventful crisis. The Act of Uniformity excluded, in one day, two thousand ministers (many of whom were distinguished for profound piety and learning) from the bosom of the Church of England; and thus, by the acts of three successive reigns, the spirit of independence was established in America, and dissent in England, from which such mighty results have since followed.

We have indulged in these remarks, because we wish to show the tendency of that high feeling, which, originating, as we sincerely believe, in a cordial attachment to our Church, endangers, by mistaking the means, the stability of the edifice which it seeks to support. We think this feeling, though abated in its intenseness, still exists: and, cast as we now are into perilous times, when Churches and States are undergoing a most scrutinizing inquiry, we are deeply solicitous that the past should operate as a beacon for the future. If the Church of England is to be preserved as a component part of our institutions, and in its ascendancy over the public mind, the members of that Church must not too incautiously resist the spirit of the age, but seek to guide what they cannot arrest. Let the value and necessity of an Established Church be recognized by the evidence of its usefulness; let the pure doctrines

* In his "Emilie." The memorable remark of Madame de Pompadour will not soon be forgotten; "Après nous le Deluge." "After us, the Deluge."

† Rousseau's prophecy of this great catastrophe has been already inserted; but the most remarkable prediction, specifying even the precise period of its fulfillment, is to be found in Fleming's "Apocalyptic Key," published so far back as the year 1701. In this work is the following passage. "Perhaps *the French monarchy* may begin to be considerably humbled about that time: that whereas the present French King (Lewis XIV.) takes the *Sun* for his *emblem*, and this for his motto, 'nec pluribus impar,' he may at length, or rather his successors, and the monarchy itself, *at least before the year* 1794, be forced to acknowledge that in respect to neighboring potentates, he is even *singulis impar*."*

We add one more very curious prediction.

"Yes; that Versailles, which thou hast made for the glory of thy names, I will throw to the ground, and all your insolent inscriptions, figures, abominable pictures. And Paris; Paris, that imperial city, I will afflict it dreadfully. Yes, I will afflict the Royal Family. Yes, I will avenge the iniquity of the King upon his grandchildren."—*Lacy's Prophetic Warnings*, London, 1797, p. 42.

* By referring to Revelation xvi. 8, it will be seen that the fourth vial is poured out on the *Sun*, which is interpreted as denoting the humiliation of some eminent potentates of the Romish communion, and therefore principally to be understood of the House of Bourbon, which takes precedence of them all.

of the Gospel be proclaimed in our pulpits; and a noble ardor and co-operation be manifested in the prosperity of our great Institutions,—our Bible, Missionary, and Jewish societies. She will then attract the favor, the love and the veneration of the poor, and diffuse a holy and purifying influence among all classes in the community. Her priests will thus be clothed with righteousness, and her saints shout for joy. To her worshippers we may then exclaim with humble confidence and joy, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."*

We now resume the correspondence of Cowper.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Jan. 3, 1790.

My dear Sir,—I have been long silent, but you have had the charity, I hope and believe, not to ascribe my silence to a wrong cause. The truth is, I have been too busy to write to anybody, having been obliged to give my early mornings to the revisal and correction of a little volume of Hymns for Children, written by I know not whom. This task I finished but yesterday, and while it was in hand wrote only to my cousin, and to her rarely. From her, however, I knew that you would hear of my well-being, which made me less anxious about my debts to you than I could have been otherwise.

I am almost the only person at Weston known to you who have enjoyed tolerable health this winter. In your next letter give us some account of your own state of health, for I have had many anxieties about you. The winter has been mild; but our winters are in general such, that, when a friend leaves us in the beginning of that season, I always feel in my heart a *perhaps*, importing that we have possibly met for the last time, and that the robins may whistle on the grave of one of us before the return of summer.

I am still thrumming Homer's lyre; that is to say, I am still employed in my last revisal; and, to give you some idea of the intenseness of my toils, I will inform you that it cost me all the morning yesterday, and all the evening, to translate a single simile to my mind. The transitions from one member of the subject to another, though easy and natural in the Greek, turn out often so intolerably awkward in an English version, that almost endless labor and no little address are requisite to give them grace and elegance. I forget if I told you that your German Clavis has been of considerable use to me. I am indebted to it for a right understanding of the manner in which Achilles prepared pork, mutton, and goat's flesh, for the entertainment of his friends, in the night when they came deputed by Agamemnon to negotiate a reconciliation. A passage of which nobody in the world is perfectly master, myself only, and Slaukenbergius excepted, nor ever was, except when Greek was a *live* language.

I do not know whether my cousin has told you or not how I brag in my letters to her concerning my Translation; perhaps her modesty feels more for me than mine for myself, and she would blush to let even you know the degree of my self-conceit on that subject. I will tell you, however, expressing myself as decently as my vanity will permit, that it has undergone such a change for the better in this last revisal, that I have much warmer hopes of success than formerly.

Yours, W. C.

* Psalm xlviii. 12—14.

TO MRS KING.*

The Lodge, Jan. 4, 1790.

My dear Madam,—Your long silence has occasioned me to have a thousand anxious thoughts about you. So long it has been, that, whether I now write to a Mrs. King at present on earth, or already in heaven, I know not. I have friends whose silence troubles me less, though I have known them longer; because, if I hear not from themselves, I yet hear from others that they are still living, and likely to live. But if your letters cease to bring me news of your welfare, from whom can I gain the desired intelligence? The birds of the air will not bring it, and third person there is none between us by whom it might be conveyed. Nothing is plain to me on this subject, but that either you are dead, or very much indisposed; or, which would affect me with perhaps as deep a concern, though of a different kind, very much offended. The latter of these suppositions I think the least probable, conscious as I am of an habitual desire to offend nobody, especially a lady, and especially a lady to whom I have many obligations. But all the three solutions above mentioned are very uncomfortable; and if you live, and can send me one that will cause me less pain than either of them, I conjure you by the charity and benevolence which I know influence you upon all occasions, to communicate it without delay.

It is possible, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, that you are not be-

* Private correspondence.

come perfectly indifferent to me and to what concerns me. I will therefore add a word or two on a subject which once interested you, and which is, for that reason worthy to be mentioned, though truly for no other—meaning myself. I am well, and have been so, (uneasiness on your account excepted,) both in mind and body, ever since I wrote to you last. I have still the same employment. Homer in the morning, and Homer in the evening, as constant as the day goes round. In the spring I hope to send the Iliad and Odyssey to the press. So much for me and my occupations. Poor Mrs. Unwin has hitherto had but an unpleasant winter: unpleasant as constant pain, either in the head or side, could make it. She joins me in affectionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King, and in earnest wishes that you will soon favor me with a line that shall relieve me from all my perplexities.

I am, dear madam,
Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, Jan 18, 1790.

My dear Madam,—The sincerest thanks attend you, both from Mrs. Unwin and myself, for many good things, on some of which I have already regaled with an affectionate remembrance of the giver.

The report that informed you of inquiries made by Mrs. Unwin after a house at Huntingdon was unfounded. We have no thought of quitting Weston, unless the same Providence that led us hither should lead us away. It is a situation perfectly agreeable to us both; and to me in particular who write much, and walk much, and consequently love silence and retirement, one of the most eligible. If it has a fault, it is that it seems to threaten us with a certainty of never seeing you. But may we not hope that, when a milder season shall have improved your health, we may yet, notwithstanding the distance, be favored with Mr. King's and your company? A better season will likewise improve the roads, and, exactly in proportion as it does so, will, in effect, lessen the interval between us. I know not if Mr. Martyn be a mathematician, but most probably he is a good one, and he can tell you that this is a proposition mathematically true, though rather paradoxical in appearance.

I am obliged to that gentleman, and *much* obliged to him for his favorable opinion of my translation. What parts of Homer are particularly intended by the critics as those in which I shall probably fall short, I know not; but let me fail where I may, I shall fail nowhere through want of endeavors to avoid it. The under parts of the poems (those I mean which are merely narrative) I find the most difficult. These can only be supported by the diction, and on these, for that reason, I have bestowed the most abundant labor. Fine similes and fine speeches take care of themselves; but the exact process of slaying a sheep, and dressing it, it is not so easy to dignify in our language, and in our measure. But I shall have the comfort, as I said, to reflect, that, whatever may be hereafter laid to my charge, the sin of idleness will not. Justly, at least, it never will. In the meantime, my dear madam, I whisper to you a secret;—not to fall short of the original in everything is impossible.

I send you, I believe, all my pieces that you have never seen. Did I not send you "Catharina?" If not, you shall have it hereafter. I am, dear madam, ever, ever in haste,

Sincerely yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

We are here first introduced to the notice of the Rev. John Johnson, the cousin of Cowper, by the maternal line of the Donnes. The poet often used familiarly to call him "Johnny of Norfolk." His name will frequently appear in the course of the ensuing correspondence. It is to his watchful and affectionate care that the poet was indebted for all the solace that the most disinterested regard, and highly conscientious sense of duty, could administer, under circumstances the most afflicting. Nor did he ever leave his beloved bard, till he had closed his eyes in death, and paid the last sad offices, due to departed worth and genius. His acquaintance with Cowper commenced about this time, by a voluntary introduction, on his own part. He has recorded the particulars of this first interview and visit in a poem, entitled "Recollections of Cowper." We trust that his estimable widow may see fit to communicate it to the public, who we have no doubt will feel a lively interest in a subject, issuing from the kinsman of Cowper.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 22, 1790.

My dear Coz.,—I had a letter yesterday from the wild boy Johnson, for whom I have conceived a great affection. It was just such a letter as I like, of the true helter-skelter kind; and, though he writes a remarkably good hand, scribbled with such rapidity, that it was barely legible. He gave me a droll account of the adventures of Lord Howard's note, and of his own pursuit of it. The poem he brought me came as from Lord Howard, with his Lordship's request that I would revise it. It is in the form of a pastoral, and is entitled, "The Tale of the Lute, or the Beauties of Audley End." I read it attentively, was much pleased with part of it,

and part of it I equally disliked. I told him so, and in such terms as one naturally uses when there seems to be no occasion to qualify or to alleviate censure. I observed him afterwards somewhat more thoughtful and silent, but occasionally as pleasant as usual; and in Kilwick-wood, where we walked the next day, the truth came out—that he was himself the author, and that Lord Howard, not approving it altogether, and several friends of his own age, to whom he had shown it, differing from his Lordship in opinion, and being highly pleased with it, he had come at last to a resolution to abide by my judgment; a measure to which Lord Howard by all means advised him. He accordingly brought it, and will bring it again in the summer, when we shall lay our heads together and try to mend it.

I have lately had a letter also from Mrs. King, to whom I had written to inquire whether she were living or dead: she tells me the critics expect from my Homer everything in some parts, and that in others I shall fall short. These are the Cambridge critics; and she has her intelligence from the botanical professor, Martyn. That gentleman in reply answers them, that I shall fall short in nothing, but shall disappoint them all. It shall be my endeavor to do so, and I am not without hope of succeeding.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Feb. 2, 1790.

My dear Friend,—Should Heyne's* Homer appear before mine, which I hope is not probable, and should he adopt in it the opinion of Bentley, that the whole of the last Odyssey is spurious, I will dare to contradict both him and the Doctor. I am only in part of Bentley's mind (if indeed his mind were such) in this matter, and, giant as he was in learning, and eagle-eyed in critieism, am persuaded, convinced, am sure (can I be more positive?) that, except from the moment when the Ithacans began to meditate an attack on the cottage of Laertes, and thence to the end, that book is the work of Homer. From the moment aforesaid, I yield the point, or rather, have never, since I had any skill in Homer, felt myself at all inclined to dispute it.† But I believe perfectly at the same time, that Homer himself alone excepted, the Greek poet never existed, who could have written the speeches made by the shade of Agamemnon, in which there is more insight into the human heart discovered, than I ever saw in any other work, unless in Shakspeare's. I am equally disposed to fight for the whole passage that describes Laertes, and the interview between him and Ulysses. Let Bentley grant these to Homer, and I will shake hands with him as to all the rest. The battle with which the book concludes is, I think, a paltry battle, and there is a huddle in the management of it altogether unworthy of my favorite, and the favorite of all ages.

If you should happen to fall into company with Dr. Warton* again, you will not, I dare say, forget to make him my respectful compliments, and to assure him that I felt myself not a little flattered by the favorable mention he was pleased to make of me and my labors. The poet who pleases a man like him has nothing left to wish for. I am glad that you were pleased with my young cousin Johnson; he is a boy, and bashful, but has great merit in respect both of character and intellect. So far at least as in a week's knowledge of him I could possibly learn, he is very amiable and very sensible, and inspired me with a warm wish to know him better.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

The Lodge, Feb. 5, 1790.

My dear Friend,—Your kind letter deserved a speedier answer, but you know my excuse, which, were I to repeat always, my letters would resemble the fag-end of a newspaper, where we always find the price of stocks, detailed with little or no variation.

* A German critic, distinguished by his classical erudition and profound learning.

† In this laborious undertaking, Cowper was assisted by the following editions of that great poet.

1st. That of Clark, 1729—1754. 4 vols. Gr. et Lat.

This is the most popular edition of Homer, and the basis of many subsequent editions. The text is formed on that of Schrevelius and of Barnes. The notes are grammatical and philological, with numerous quotations from Virgil of parallel passages. The want of the ancient Greek Scholia is the principal defect.

2ndly. That of Villoison. Venice. 1788. Gr.

This edition is distinguished by a fac-simile of the text and scholia of a MS. of Homer, in the tenth century, found in the library of St. Mark, Venice. The Preface abounds in learned and interesting matter, and is in high estimation among scholars. Wolf, Heyne, and the Oxford, or Grenville edition, have profited largely by Villoison's labors. His industrious search after valuable MSS. and care in collating them with received editions; his critical acumen, sound scholarship, and profound erudition, entitle him to the gratitude and praise of the classical student. He died in 1805.

3rdly. That of Heyne. Leipsick. 1802, 8 vols. Gr. et Lat.

The text is formed on that of Wolf. The editor was assisted in this undertaking by a copy of Bentley's Homer, in which that celebrated critic restores the long-lost digamma; and by an ancient and valuable MS. belonging to Mr. Townley.

Of this edition it has been observed that "the work of Professor Heyne will in a great measure preclude the necessity of farther collations, from which nothing of consequence can be expected. When the Greek language is better understood than it is at present, it will be resorted to as a rich repository of philological information."—*Edinburgh Review*, July, 1803.

* Dr. Warton (Joseph) head master of Winchester School, upwards of thirty years, where he presided with high reputation; author of "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," and of an edition of the Works of Pope, in 9 vols. 8vo. He was brother to Thomas Warton, well known for his History of English Poetry. Died in 1800.

† Private correspondence.

When January returns, you have your feelings concerning me, and such as prove the faithfulness of your friendship.* I have mine also concerning myself, but they are of a cast different from yours. Yours have a mixture of sympathy and tender solicitude, which makes them, perhaps, not altogether unpleasant. Mine, on the contrary, are of an unmixed nature, and consist, simply and merely, of the most alarming apprehensions. Twice has that month returned upon me, accompanied by such horrors as I have no reason to suppose ever made part of the experience of any other man. I accordingly look forward to it, and meet it, with a dread not to be imagined. I number the nights as they pass, and in the morning bless myself that another night is gone, and no harm has happened. This may argue, perhaps, some imbecility of mind, and no small degree of it; but it is natural, I believe, and so natural as to be necessary and unavoidable. I know that God is not governed by secondary causes, in any of his operations, and that, on the contrary, they are all so many agents in his hand, which strike only when he bids them. I know consequently that one month is as dangerous to me as another, and that, in the middle of summer, at noonday, and in the clear sunshine, I am in reality, unless guarded by him, as much exposed as when fast asleep at midnight, and in midwinter. But we are not always the wiser for our knowledge, and I can no more avail myself of mine, than if it were in the head of another man, and not in my own. I have heard of bodily aches and ails, that have been particularly troublesome when the season returned in which the hurt that occasioned them was received. The mind, I believe (with my own, however, I am sure it is so), is liable to similar periodical affection. But February is come, my terror is passed, and some shades of the gloom that attended his presence have passed with him. I look forward with a little cheerfulness to the buds and the leaves that will soon appear, and say to myself, till they turn yellow I will make myself easy. The year will go round, and January will approach. I shall tremble again, and I know it: but in the meantime I will be as comfortable as I can. Thus, in respect to peace of mind, such as it is that I enjoy, I subsist, as the poor are vulgarly said to do, from hand to mouth: and of a Christian, such as you once knew me, am, by a strange transformation, become an Epicurean philosopher, bearing this motto on my mind,—*Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere.*

I have run on in a strain that the beginning of your letter suggested to me, with such impetuosity, that I have not left myself opportunity to write more by the present post; and, being unwilling that you should wait longer for what will be worth nothing when you get it, will only express the great pleasure we feel on hearing, as we did lately from Mr. Bull, that Mrs. Newton is so much better.

Truly yours, W. C.

* January was a season of the year when the nervous depression under which Cowper labored was generally the most severe.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 9, 1790.

I have sent you lately scraps instead of letters, having had occasion to answer immediately on the receipt, which always happens while I am *deep in Homer.*

I knew when I recommended Johnson to you, that you would find some way to serve him, and so it has happened; for, notwithstanding your own apprehensions to the contrary, you have already procured him a chaplainship:* this is pretty well, considering that it is an early day, and that you have but just begun to know that there is such a man under heaven. I had rather myself be patronized by a person of small interest, with a heart like yours, than by the Chancellor himself, if he did not care a farthing for me.

If I did not desire you to make my acknowledgments to Anonymous, as I believe I did not, it was because I am not aware that I am warranted to do so. But the omission is of less consequence, because, whoever he is, though he has no objection to doing the kindest things, he seems to have an aversion to the thanks they merit.

You must know that two odes composed by Horace have lately been discovered at Rome.† I wanted them transcribed into the blank leaves of a little Horace of mine, and Mrs. Throckmorton performed that service

* The poet's kinsman was made chaplain to Dr. Spencer Madan, the Bishop of Peterborough.

† These Odes proved to be forgeries. They were reported to have been found in the Palatine Library, and communicated to the public by Gaspar Pallavicini, the sub-librarian. We have room only for the following:—

AD SALIEM FLORUM.

Discolor grandem gravat uva ramum;
Instat Autumnus; glacialis anno
Mox hyems volvente ndiret, capillis
Horrida canis.

Jam licet Nymphas trepidè fugaces
Insequi, lento pede detinendas,
Et labris captæ, simulantis iram,
Oscula figi.

Jam licit vino madidos vetusto
De die hetum recinare carmen;
Flore, si te des hilarum, licebit
Sumere noctem

Jam vide curas Aquilone sparsas
Mens viri fortis sibi constat, utrum
Serius lethi citiusve tristis
Advolat hora.

There is a false quantity in the first stanza, which affords presumptive evidence of forgery.

The title of the second Ode is, "Ad Librum Suum."

for me; in a blank leaf, therefore, of the same book, I wrote the following:—

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,

On her beautiful Transcript of Horace's Ode,

AD LIBRUM SUUM.

Maria, could Horace have guess'd
What honors awaited his ode,
To his own little volume address'd,
The honor which you have bestow'd,
Who have traced it in characters here,
So elegant, even, and neat;
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer,
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer if you please, he had said,
Hereafter a nymph shall arise,
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
The glory your malice denies,
Shall dignity give to my lay,
Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
Nothing ever was written so well.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 26, 1790.

You have set my heart at ease, my cousin, so far as you are yourself the object of its anxieties. What other troubles it feels can be cured by God alone. But you are never silent a week longer than usual, without giving an opportunity to my imagination (ever fruitful in flowers of a sable hue) to tease me with them day and night. London is indeed a pestilent place, as you call it; and I would, with all my heart, that thou hadst less to do with it; were you under the same roof with me, I should know you to be safe, and should never distress you with melancholy letters.

I feel myself well enough inclined to the measure you propose, and will show to your new acquaintance, with all my heart, a sample of my translation, but it shall not be, if you please, taken from the Odyssey. It is a poem of a gentler character than the Iliad, and, as I propose to carry her by a *coup de main*, I shall employ Achilles, Agamemnon, and the two armies of Greece and Troy in my service. I will accordingly send you in the box that I received from you last night the two first books of the Iliad for that lady's perusal; to those I have given a third revisal; for them therefore I will be answerable, and am not afraid to stake the credit of my work upon *them* with her, or with any living wight, especially one who understands the original. I do not mean that even they are finished, for I shall examine and cross-examine them yet again, and so you may tell her; but I know that they will not disgrace me: whereas it is so long since I have looked at the Odyssey, that I know nothing at all about it. They shall set sail from Olney on Monday morning in the diligence, and will reach you, I hope, in the evening. As soon as she has done with them, I shall be glad to have them again, for the time draws near when I shall want to give them the last touch.

I am delighted with Mrs. Bodham's* kindness in giving me the only picture of my mother that is to be found, I suppose, in all the world. I had rather possess it than the richest jewel in the British crown, for I loved her with an affection that her death, fifty-two years since, has not in the least abated. I remember her too, young as I was when she died, well enough to know that it is a very exact resemblance of her, and as such it is to me invaluable. Everybody loved her, and, with an amiable character so impressed upon all her features, everybody was sure to do so.

I have a very affectionate and a very clever letter from Johnson, who promises me the transcript of the books entrusted to him in a few days. I have a great love for that young man; he has some drops of the same stream in his veins that once animated the original of that dear picture.† W. C.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

Weston, Feb. 27, 1790.

My dearest Rose,‡—Whom I thought withered and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still alive: nothing could give me greater pleasure than to know it, and to learn it from yourself. I loved you dearly when you were a child, and love you not a jot the less for having ceased to be so. Every creature that bears any affinity to my mother is dear to me, and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her: I love you therefore, and love you much, both for her sake and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt, had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and, of course, the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I had completed my sixth year, yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember too a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared

* Mrs. Bodham was a cousin of Cowper's, connected with him by his maternal family, the Donnes.

† The manner in which Cowper speaks of his kinsman is uniformly the same—kind, affectionate, and endearing.

‡ Mrs. Bodham was always addressed by Cowper in this playful and complimentary style, though her Christian name was Ann.

her memory to me beyond expression.* There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than the Cowper, and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought, in the days of my childhood, much to resemble my mother, and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight I must be supposed a competent judge, can trace both her and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability, and a little I would hope both of his and of her ———, I know not what to call it without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention, but speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say *good nature*. Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's,† and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points. The truth is, that whatever I am, I love you all.

I account it a happy event that brought the dear boy, your nephew, to my knowledge, and that, breaking through all the restraints which his natural bashfulness imposed on him, he determined to find me out. He is amiable to a degree that I have seldom seen, and I often long with impatience to see him again.

My dearest cousin, what shall I say in answer to your affectionate invitation? I *must* say this, I cannot come now, nor soon, and I wish with all my heart I could. But I will tell you what may be done, perhaps, and it will answer to us just as well: you and Mr. Bodham can come to Weston, can you not? The summer is at hand, there are roads and wheels to bring you, and you are neither of you translating Homer. I am crazed that I cannot ask you all together for want of house-room, but for Mr. Bodham and yourself we have good room, and equally good for any third in the shape of a Donne, whether named Hewitt,* Bodham, Balls, or Johnson, or by whatever name distinguished. Mrs. Hewitt has particular claims upon me; she was my playfellow at Berkhamstead, and has a share in my warmest affections. Pray tell her so! Neither do I at all forget my cousin Harriet. She and I have been many a time merry at Catfield, and have made the parsonage ring with laughter:—Give my love to her. Assure yourself, my dearest cousin, that I shall receive you, as if you were my sister, and Mrs. Unwin is, for my sake, prepared to do the same. When she has seen you she will love you for your own.

I am much obliged to Mr. Bodham for his kindness to my Homer, and with my love to you all, and with Mrs. Unwin's kind respects, am,

My dear, dear Rose, ever yours,
W. C.

P. S.—I mourn the death of your poor brother Castress, whom I should have seen had he lived, and should have seen with the greatest pleasure. He was an amiable boy, and I was very fond of him.

Still another P. S.—I find on consulting Mrs. Unwin that I have underrated our capabilities, and that we have not only room for you and Mr. Bodham, but for two of your sex, and even for your nephew into the bargain. We shall be happy to have it all so occupied.

Your nephew tells me that his sister, in the qualities of the mind, resembles you; that is enough to make her dear to me, and I beg you will assure her that she is so. Let it not be long before I hear from you.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 28, 1790.

My dear Cousin John,—I have much wished to hear from you, and, though you are welcome to write to Mrs. Unwin as often as you please, I wish myself to be numbered among your correspondents.

I shall find time to answer you, doubt it not! Be as busy as we may, we can always find time to do what is agreeable to us. By the way, had you a letter from Mrs. Unwin? I am witness that she addressed one to you before you went into Norfolk, but your mathematico-poetical head forgot to acknowledge the receipt of it.

I was never more pleased in my life than to learn from herself, that my dearest Rose† is still alive. Had she not engaged me to love her by the sweetness of her character

* No present could possibly have been more acceptable to Cowper than the receipt of his mother's picture. He composed the beautiful verses, on this occasion, so tenderly descriptive of the impression made on his youthful imagination by the remembrance of her virtues. We extract the following passage:—

My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day.
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery-window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was. Where thou art gone,
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived;
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow*, even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

† Dr. John Donne, an eminent and learned divine, whose life is written by Izaak Walton. Born 1573, died 1631.

* The Rev. J. Johnson's sister.
† Mrs. Ann Bodham.

when a child, she would have done it effectually now by making me the most acceptable present in the world, my own dear mother's picture. I am perhaps the only person living who remembers her, but I remember her well, and can attest on my own knowledge the truth of the resemblance. Amiable and elegant as the countenance is, such exactly was her own; she was one of the tenderest parents, and so just a copy of her is therefore to me invaluable.

I wrote yesterday to my Rose, to tell her all this, and to thank her for her kindness in sending it. Neither do I forget your kindness, who intimated to her that I should be happy to possess it.

She invites me into Norfolk, but alas! she might as well invite the house in which I dwell; for, all other considerations and impediments apart, how is it possible that a translator of Homer should lumber to such a distance! But, though I cannot comply with her kind invitation, I have made myself the best amends in my power, by inviting her and all the family of Donnes to Weston. Perhaps we could not accommodate them all at once, but in succession we could, and can at any time find room for five, three of them being females, and one a married one. You are a mathematician; tell me then how five persons can be lodged in three beds (two males and three females) and I shall have good hope that you will proceed a senior optime. It would make me happy to see our house so furnished. As to yourself, whom I know to be a *subscalarian*, or a man that sleeps under the stairs,* I should have no objection at all, neither could you possibly have any yourself to the garret, as a place in which you might be disposed of with great felicity of accommodation.

I thank you much for your services in the transcribing way, and would by no means have you despair of an opportunity to serve me in the same way yet again;—write to me soon, and tell me when I shall see you.

I have not said the half that I have to say, but breakfast is at hand, which always terminates my epistles.

What have you done with your poem? The trimming that it procured you here has not, I hope, put you out of conceit with it entirely; you are more than equal to the alteration that it needs. Only remember that in writing, perspicuity is always more than half the battle; the want of it is the ruin of more than half the poetry that is published. A meaning that does not stare you in the face is as bad as no meaning, because nobody will take the pains to poke for it. So now adieu for the present. Beware of killing yourself with problems, for, if you do, you will never live to be another Sir Isaac.

* This expression alludes to the situation of the rooms occupied by him at Caius College, Cambridge.

Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances attend you; Lady Hesketh is much disposed to love you; perhaps most who know you have some little tendency the same way.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 8, 1790.

My dearest Cousin,—I thank thee much and oft, for negociating so well this poetical concern with Mrs. ——, and for sending me her opinion in her own hand. I should be unreasonable indeed not to be highly gratified by it, and I like it the better for being modestly expressed. It is, as you know, and it shall be some months longer, my daily business to polish and improve what is done, that when the whole shall appear she may find her expectations answered. I am glad also that thou didst send her the sixteenth Odyssey, though, as I said before, I know not at all at present whereof it is made; but I am sure that thou wouldst not have sent it, hadst thou not conceived a good opinion of it thyself, and thought that it would do me credit. It was very kind in thee to sacrifice to this Minerva on my account.

For my sentiments on the subject of the Test Act, I cannot do better than refer thee to my poem, entitled and called "Expostulation." I have there expressed myself not much in its favor, considering it in a religious view; and in a political one, I like it not a jot the better.* I am neither Tory nor high Churchman, but an old Whig, as my father was before me; and an enemy, consequently, to all tyrannical impositions.

Mrs. Unwin bids me return thee many thanks for thy inquiries so kindly made concerning her health. She is a little better than of late, but has been ill continually ever since last November. Everything that could try patience and submission she has had, and her submission and patience have answered in the trial, though mine, on her account, have often failed sadly.

I have a letter from Johnson, who tells me that he has sent his transcript to you, begging at the same time more copy. Let him have it by all means; he is an industrious youth, and I love him dearly. I told him that you

* The following is the passage alluded to.

Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office-key, a picklock to a place?
That infidels may prove their title good,
By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write:
And, though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look'd within?
Expostulation.

The Test Act is now repealed.

are disposed to love him a little. A new poem is born on the receipt of my mother's picture:—thou shalt have it.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, March 11, 1790.

My dear Friend,—I was glad to hear from you, for a line from you gives me always much pleasure, but was not much gladdened by the contents of your letter. The state of your health, which I have learned more accurately perhaps from my cousin, except in this last instance, than from yourself, has alarmed me, and even she has collected her information upon that subject more from your looks than from your own acknowledgments. To complain much and often of our indispositions does not always insure the pity of the hearer, perhaps sometimes forfeits it; but to dissemble them altogether, or at least to suppress the worst, is attended ultimately with an inconvenience greater still; the secret will out at last, and our friends, unprepared to receive it, are doubly distressed about us. In saying this, I squint a little at Mrs. Unwin, who will read it; it is with her, as with you, the only subject on which she practices any dissimulation at all; the consequence is, that, when she is much indisposed, I never believe myself in possession of the whole truth, live in constant expectation of hearing something worse, and at the long run am seldom disappointed. It seems, therefore, as on all other occasions, so even in this, the better course on the whole to appear what we are; not to lay the fears of our friends asleep by cheerful looks, which do not probably belong to us, or by letters written as if we were well, when in fact we are very much otherwise. On condition, however, that you act differently towards me for the future, I will pardon the past, and she may gather from my clemency shown to you some hopes, on the same conditions, of similar clemency to herself.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston, March 12, 1790.

My dear Madam,—I live in such a nook, have so few opportunities of hearing news, and so little time to read it, that to me to begin a letter seems always a sort of forlorn hope. Can it be possible, I say to myself, that I should have anything to communicate? These misgivings have an ill effect, so far as my punctuality is concerned, and are apt to deter me from the business of letter-writing, as from an enterprise altogether impracticable.

I will not say that you are more pleased with my trifles than they deserve, lest I should seem to call your judgment in question; but I suspect that a little partiality to the brother of my brother enters into the opinion you form of them. No matter, however, by what you are influenced, it is for my interest that you should like them at any rate, because, such as they are, they are the only return I can make you for all your kindness. This consideration will have two effects; it will have a tendency to make me more industrious in the production of such pieces, and more attentive to the manner in which I write them. This reminds me of a piece in your possession, which I will entreat you to commit to the flames, because I am somewhat ashamed of it. To make you amends, I hereby promise to send you a new edition of it when time shall serve, delivered from the passages that I dislike in the first, and in other respects amended. The piece that I mean, is one entitled—"To Lady Hesketh on her furnishing for me our house at Weston"—or, as the lawyers say, words to that amount. I have, likewise, since I sent you the last packet, been delivered of two or three other brats, and, as the year proceeds, shall probably add to the number. All that come shall be basketed in time, and conveyed to your door.

I have lately received from a female cousin of mine in Norfolk, whom I have not seen these five-and-thirty years, a picture of my own mother. She died when I wanted two days of being six years old; yet I remember her perfectly, find the picture a strong likeness of her, and, because her memory has been ever precious to me, have written a poem on the receipt of it: a poem which, one excepted, I had more pleasure in writing than any that I ever wrote. That one was addressed to a lady whom I expect in a few minutes to come down to breakfast, and who has supplied to me the place of my own mother—my own invaluable mother, these six-and-twenty years. Some sons may be said to have had many fathers, but a plurality of mothers is not common.

Adieu, my dear madam; be assured that I always think of you with much esteem and affection, and am, with mine and Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to you and yours, most unfeignedly your friend and humble servant,

W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

The Lodge, March 21, 1790.

My dearest Madam,—I shall only observe on the subject of your absence, that you have stretched it since you went, and have made it a week longer. Weston is sadly *unked**

* Private correspondence.

* A common provincialism in Buckinghamshire, probably a corruption of *uncouth*.

without you; and here are two of us, who will be heartily glad to see you again. I believe you are happier at home than anywhere, which is a comfortable belief to your neighbors, because it affords assurance that, since you are neither likely to ramble for pleasure, nor to meet with any avocations of business, while Weston shall continue to be your home, it will not often want you.

The two first books of my Iliad have been submitted to the inspection and scrutiny of a great critic of your sex, at the instance of my cousin, as you may suppose. The lady is mistress of more tongues than a few (it is to be hoped she is single); and particularly she is mistress of the Greek.* She returned them with expressions, that, if anything could make a poet prouder than all poets naturally are, would have made me so. I tell you this, because I know that you all interest yourselves in the success of the said Iliad.

My periwig is arrived, and is the very perfection of all periwigs, having only one fault; which is, that my head will only go into the first half of it, the other half, or the upper part of it, continuing still unoccupied. My artist in this way at Olney has, however, undertaken to make the whole of it tenantable, and then I shall be twenty years younger than you have ever seen me.

I heard of your birth-day very early in the morning; the news came from the steeple.

W. C.

The following letter is interesting as recording his opinion of the style best adapted to a translation of Homer.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 22, 1790.

I rejoice, my dearest cousin, that my MSS. have roamed the earth so successfully, and have met with no disaster. The single book excepted, that went to the bottom of the Thames, and rose again, they have been fortunate without exception. I am not superstitious, but have, nevertheless, as good a right to believe that adventure an omen, and a favorable one, as Swift had to interpret as he did the loss of a fine fish, which he had no sooner laid on the bank than it flounced into the water again. This, he tells us himself, he always considered as a type of his future disappointments; and why may not I as well consider the marvellous recovery of my lost book from the bottom of the Thames as typical of its future prosperity? To say the truth, I have no fears now about the success of my translation, though in time past I have had many. I knew there was a style somewhere, could I but find it, in which Homer ought to be rendered, and which alone would suit him. Long time I blundered about it, ere I could attain to any decided judgment on the matter; at first, I was betrayed by a desire of accommodating my language to the simplicity of his into much of the quaintness that belonged to our writers of the fifteenth century. In the course of many revisals I have delivered myself from this evil, I believe, entirely; but I have done it slowly, and as a man separates himself from his mistress when he is going to marry. I had so strong a predilection in favor of this style at first, that I was crazed to find that others were not as much enamored with it as myself. At every passage of that sort which I obliterated, I groaned bitterly, and said to myself, I am spoiling my work to please those who have no taste for the simple graces of antiquity. But, in measure as I adopted a more modern phraseology, I became a convert to their opinion, and, in the last revisal, which I am now making, am not sensible of having spared a single expression of the obsolete kind. I see my work so much improved by this alteration, that I am filled with wonder at my own backwardness to assent to the necessity of it, and the more when I consider that Milton, with whose manner I account myself intimately acquainted, is never quaint, never twangs through the nose, but is everywhere grand and elegant, without resorting to musty antiquity for his beauties. On the contrary, he took a long stride forward, left the language of his own day far behind him, and anticipated the expressions of a century yet to come.

I have now, as I said, no longer any doubt of the event, but I will give thee a shilling if thou wilt tell me what I shall say in my Preface. It is an affair of much delicacy, and I have as many opinions about it as there are whims in a weathercock.

Send my MSS. and thine when thou wilt. In a day or two I shall enter on the last Iliad; when I have finished it I shall give the Odyssey one more reading, and shall therefore shortly have occasion for the copy in thy possession, but you see that there is no need to hurry.

I leave the little space for Mrs. Unwin's use, who means, I believe, to occupy it,

And am evermore thine most truly,

W. C.

Postscript, in the hand of Mrs. Unwin.

You cannot imagine how much your ladyship would oblige your unworthy servant, if you would be so good to let me know in what point I differ from you. All that at present I can say is, that I will readily sacrifice my own opinion, unless I can give you a substantial reason for adhering to it.

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* Mrs. Carter.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, March 23, 1790.

Your MSS. arrived safe in New Norfolk-street, and I am much obliged to you for your labors. Were you now at Weston, I could furnish you with employment for some weeks, and shall perhaps be equally able to do it in summer, for I have lost my best amanuensis in this place, Mr. G. Throckmorton, who is gone to Bath.

You are a man to be envied who have never read the Odyssey, which is one of the most amusing story-books in the world. There is also much of the finest poetry in the world to be found in it, notwithstanding all that Longinus has insinuated to the contrary.* His comparison of the Iliad and Odyssey to the meridian and to the declining sun is pretty, but, I am persuaded, not just. The prettiness of it seduced him: he was otherwise too judicious a reader of Homer to have made it. I can find in the latter no symptoms of impaired ability, none of the effects of age; on the contrary, it seems to me a certainty, that Homer, had he written the Odyssey in his youth, could not have written it better; and if the Iliad in his old age, that he would have written it just as well. A critic would tell me that, instead of *written*, I should have said *composed*. Very likely—but I am not writing to one of that snarling generation.

My boy, I long to see thee again. It has happened some way or other, that Mrs. Unwin and I have conceived a great affection for thee. That I should is the less to be wondered at, (because thou art a shred of my own mother;) neither is the wonder great, that she should fall into the same predicament; for she loves everything that I love. You will observe that your own personal right to be beloved makes no part of the consideration. There is nothing that I touch with so much tenderness as the vanity of a young man; because, I know how extremely susceptible he is of impressions that might hurt him in that particular part of his composition. If you should ever prove a coxcomb,† from which character you stand just now at a greater distance than any young man I know, it shall never be said that I have made you one; no, you will gain nothing by me but the honor of being much valued by a poor poet, who can do you no good while he lives, and has nothing to leave you when he dies. If you can be contented to be dear to me on these conditions, so you shall; but other terms more advantageous than these, or more inviting, none have I to propose.

* Longinus compares the Odyssey to the setting sun, and the Iliad, as more characteristic of the loftiness of Homer's genius, to the splendor of the rising sun.

† No man ever possessed a happier exemption, throughout life, from such a title.

Farewell. Puzzle not yourself about a subject when you write to either of us: everything is subject enough from those we love.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, April 17, 1790.

Your letter, that now lies before me, is almost three weeks old, and therefore of full age to receive an answer, which it shall have without delay, if the interval between the present moment and that of breakfast should prove sufficient for the purpose.

Yours to Mrs. Unwin was received yesterday, for which she will thank you in due time. I have also seen, and have now in my desk, your letter to Lady Hesketh; she sent it thinking that it would divert me; in which she was not mistaken. I shall tell her when I write to her next, that you long to receive a line from her. Give yourself no trouble on the subject of the politic device you saw good to recur to, when you presented me with your manuscript;* it was an innocent deception, at least it could harm nobody save yourself; an effect which it did not fail to produce; and, since the punishment followed it so closely, by me at least it may very well be forgiven. You ask, how I can tell that you are not addicted to practices of the deceptive kind? And certainly, if the little time that I have had to study you were alone to be considered, the question would not be unreasonable; but in general a man who reaches my years finds

> "That long experience does attain
> To something like prophetic strain."

I am very much of Lavater's opinion, and persuaded that faces are as legible as books, only with these circumstances to recommend them to our perusal, that they are read in much less time, and are much less likely to deceive us. Yours gave me a favorable impression of you the moment I beheld it, and, though I shall not tell you in particular what I saw in it, for reasons mentioned in my last, I will add, that I have observed in you nothing since that has not confirmed the opinion I then formed in your favor. In fact I cannot recollect that my skill in physiognomy has ever deceived me, and I should add more on this subject had I room.

When you have shut up your mathematical books, you must give yourself to the study of Greek; not merely that you may be able to read Homer and the other Greek classics with ease, but the Greek Testament and the Greek fathers also. Thus qualified, and by the aid of you, fiddle into the bargain, together with some portion of the grace of God

* The poem on Audley End, alluded to in a former letter to Lady Hesketh.

(without which nothing can be done) to enable you to look well to your flock, when you shall get one, you will be set up for a parson. In which character, if I live to see you in it, I shall expect and hope that you will make a very different figure from most of your fraternity.* Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, April 19, 1790.

My dearest Coz.,—I thank thee for my cousin Johnson's letter, which diverted me. I had one from him lately, in which he expressed an ardent desire of a line from you, and the delight he would feel in receiving it. I know not whether you will have the charity to satisfy his longings, but mention the matter, thinking it possible that you may. A letter from a lady to a youth immersed in mathematics must be singularly pleasant.

I am finishing Homer backward, having begun at the last book, and designing to persevere in that crab-like fashion till I arrive at the first. This may remind you perhaps of a certain poet's prisoner in the Bastille (thank Heaven! in the Bastille now no more) counting the nails in the door, for variety's sake, in all directions.† I find so little to do in the last revisal, that I shall soon reach the Odyssey, and soon want those books of it which are in thy possession; but the two first of the Iliad, which are also in thy possession, much sooner; thou mayst therefore send them by the first fair opportunity. I am in high spirits on this subject, and think that I have at last licked the clumsy cub into a shape that will secure to it the favorable notice of the public. Let not —— retard me, and I shall hope to get it out next winter.

I am glad that thou hast sent the General those verses on my mother's picture. They will amuse him—only I hope that he will not miss my mother-in-law, and think that she ought to have made a third. On such an occasion it was not possible to mention her with any propriety. I rejoice at the General's recovery; may it prove a perfect one.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, April 30, 1790.

To my old friend, Dr. Madan,‡ thou couldst not have spoken better than thou didst. Tell him, I beseech you, that I have not forgotten him: tell him also, that to my heart and home he will be always welcome; nor he only, but all that are his. His judgment of my translation gave me the highest satisfaction, because I know him to be a rare old Grecian.

The General's approbation of my picture verses gave me also much pleasure. I wrote them not without tears, therefore I presume it may be that they are felt by others. Should he offer me my father's picture I shall gladly accept it. A melancholy pleasure is better than none, nay, verily, better than most. He had a sad task imposed on him, but no man could acquit himself of such a one with more discretion or with more tenderness. The death of the unfortunate young man reminded me of those lines in Lycidas,

"It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine!"

How beautiful! W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

The Lodge, May 2, 1790.

My dear Friend,—I am still at the old sport—Homer all the morning, and Homer all the evening. Thus have I been held in constant employment, I know not exactly how many, but I believe these six years, an interval of eighth months excepted. It is now become so familiar to me to take Homer from my shelf at a certain hour, that I shall no doubt continue to take him from my shelf at the same time, even after I have ceased to want him. That period is not far distant. I am now giving the last touches to a work, which, had I foreseen the difficulty of it, I should never have meddled with; but which, having at length nearly finished it to my mind, I shall discontinue with regret.

My very best compliments attend Mrs. Hill, whom I love, "unsight unseen," as they say, but yet truly.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

The Lodge, May 10, 1790.

My dear Mrs. Frog,†—You have by this time (I presume) heard from the Doctor, whom I desired to present to you our best affections, and to tell you that we are well. He sent an urchin, (I do not mean a hedgehog, commonly called an urchin in old times, but a boy, commonly so called at present,) expecting that he would find you at Buck-

* Cowper is often very sarcastic upon the clergy. We trust that these censures are not so merited in these times of reviving piety.

† We subjoin the lines to which Cowper refers:—

"To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro
The studs, that thick emboss his iron door;
Then downward and then upward, then aslant,
And then alternate; with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish; till the sum, exactly found
In all directions, he begins again."
Book V.—*Winter Morning's Walk.*

‡ The Bishop of Peterborough.

* Private correspondence.

† The sportive title generally bestowed by Cowper on his amiable friends the Throckmortons.

land's, whither he supposed you gone on Thursday. He sent him charged with divers articles, and among others with letters, or at least with a letter; which I mention, that, if the boy should be lost, together with his despatches, past all possibility of recovery, you may yet know that the Doctor stands acquitted of not writing. That he is utterly lost (that is to say, the boy—for, the Doctor being the last antecedent, as the grammarians say, you might otherwise suppose that he was intended) is the more probable, because he was never four miles from his home before, having only travelled at the side of a plough-team; and when the Doctor gave him his direction to Buckland's,* he asked, very naturally, if that place was in England. So, what has become of him Heaven knows!

I do not know that any adventures have presented themselves since your departure worth mentioning, except that the rabbit that infested your wilderness has been shot for devouring your carnations; and that I myself have been in some danger of being devoured in like manner by a great dog, viz., Pearson's. But I wrote him a letter on Friday, (I mean a letter to Pearson, not to his dog, which I mention to prevent mistakes—for the said last antecedent might occasion them in this place also,) informing him, that, unless he tied up his great mastiff in the day-time, I would send him a worse thing, commonly called and known by the name of an attorney. When I go forth to ramble in the fields, I do not sally (like Don Quixote) with a purpose of encountering monsters, if any such can be found; but am a peaceable, poor gentleman, and a poet, who mean nobody any harm, the fox-hunters and the two universities of this land excepted.

I cannot learn from any creature whether the Turnpike Bill is alive or dead—so ignorant am I, and by such ignoramuses surrounded. But, if I know little else, this at least I know, that I love you, and Mr. Frog; that I long for your return, and that I am, with Mrs. Unwin's best affections,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 28, 1790.

My dearest Coz.,—I thank thee for the offer of thy best services on this occasion. But Heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreath beside may hereafter adorn them! It would be a leaden extinguisher clapped on all the fire of my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth reading. To speak seriously, it would make me miserable, and therefore I am sure that thou, of all my friends, wouldst least wish me to wear it.*

Adieu,

Ever thine—in Homer-hurry,

W. C.

* The residence of the Throckmorton family in Berkshire.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, June 3, 1790.

You will wonder, when I tell you, that I, even I, am considered by people, who live at a great distance, as having interest and influence sufficient to procure a place at court, for those who may happen to want one. I have accordingly been applied to within these few days by a Welchman, with a wife and many children, to get him made Poet Laureat as fast as possible. If thou wouldst wish to make the world merry twice a year, thou canst not do better than procure the office for him. I will promise thee that he shall afford thee a hearty laugh in return every birth-day and every new year. He is an honest man. Adieu! W. C.

The poet's kinsman, having consulted him on the subject of his future plans and studies, receives the following reply. The letter is striking, but admits of doubt as to the justness of some of its sentiments.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, June 7, 1790.

My dear John,—You know my engagements, and are consequently able to account for my silence. I will not therefore waste time and paper in mentioning them, but will only say, that, added to those with which you are acquainted, I have had other hindrances, such as business and a disorder of my spirits, to which I have been all my life subject. At present I am, thank God! perfectly well both in mind and body. Of you I am always mindful, whether I write or not, and very desirous to see you. You will remember, I hope, that you are under engagements to us, and as soon as your Norfolk friends can spare you, will fulfil them. Give us all the time you can, and all that they can spare to us!

You never pleased me more than when you told me you had abandoned your mathematical pursuits. It grieved me to think, that you were wasting your time merely to gain a little Cambridge fame, not worth your having. I cannot be contented, that your renown should thrive nowhere but on the banks of the Cam. Conceive a nobler ambition, and never let your honor be circum-

* Lady Hesketh suggested the appointment of the office of Poet Laureat to Cowper, which had become vacant by the death of Warton in 1790. The poet declined the offer of her services, and Henry James Pye, Esq., was nominated the successor.

scribed by the paltry dimensions of a university! It is well that you have already, as you observe, acquired sufficient information in that science to enable you to pass creditably such examinations as I suppose you must hereafter undergo. Keep what you have gotten, and be content. More is needless.*

You could not apply to a worse than I am to advise you concerning your studies. I was never a regular student myself, but lost the most valuable years of my life in an attorney's office and in the Temple. I will not therefore give myself airs, and affect to know what I know not. The affair is of great importance to you, and you should be directed in it by a wiser than I. To speak however in very general terms on the subject, it seems to me that your chief concern is with history, natural philosophy, logic, and divinity. As to metaphysics, I know little about them. But the very little that I do know has not taught me to admire them. *Life is too short to afford time even for serious trifles. Pursue what you know to be attainable, make truth your object, and your studies will make you a wise man! Let your divinity, if I may advise, be the divinity of the glorious Reformation: I mean in contradiction to Arminianism, and all the* isms *that were ever broached in this world of error and ignorance.*

* To Cowper's strictures on the University of Cambridge, and his remark that the fame there acquired is not worth having, we by no means subscribe. We think no youth ought to be insensible to the honorable ambition of obtaining its distinctions, and that they are not unfrequently the precursors of subsequent eminence in the Church, the Senate, and at the Bar. We have been informed that, out of fifteen judges recently on the bench, eleven had obtained honors at our two Universities. Whether the system of education is not susceptible of much improvement is a subject worthy of deep consideration. There seems to be a growing persuasion that, at the University of Cambridge, the mode of study is too exclusively mathematical; and that a more comprehensive plan, embracing the various departments of general knowledge and literature, would be an accession to the cause of learning. We admit that the University fully affords the means of acquiring this general information, but there is a penalty attached to the acquisition which operates as a prohibition, because the prospect of obtaining honors must, in that case, be renounced. By adopting a more comprehensive system, the stimulants to exertion would be multiplied, and the end of education apparently more fully attained.

When we reflect on the singular character of the present times, the instability of governments, and the disorganized state of society, arising from conflicting principles and opinions, the question of education assumes a momentous interest. We are firmly persuaded that, unless the minds of youth be enlarged by useful knowledge, and fortified by right principles of religion, they will not be fitted to sustain the duties and responsibilities that must soon devolve upon them; nor will they be qualified to meet the storms that now threaten the political and moral horizon of Europe.

Dr. Johnson, in enumerating the advantages resulting from a university education, specifies the following as calculated to operate powerfully on the mind of the student.

"There is at least one very powerful incentive to learning; I mean the Genius of the place. It is a sort of inspiring Deity, which every youth of quick sensibility and ingenious disposition creates to himself, by reflecting that he is placed under those venerable walls where a Hooker and a Hammond, a Bacon and a Newton, once pursued the same course of science, and from whence they soared to the most elevated heights of literary fame."—*The Idler*, No. 33.

The divinity of the Reformation is called Calvinism, but injuriously. It has been that of the church of Christ in all ages. It is the divinity of St. Paul, and of St. Paul's Master, who met him in his way to Damascus.

I have written in great haste, that I might finish, if possible, before breakfast. Adieu! Let us see you soon; the sooner the better. Give my love to the silent lady, the Rose, and all my friends around you! W. C.

There is an impressive grandeur and sublimity in the concluding part of the above letter, which entitles it to be written in characters of gold. May it be engraven on the heart of every minister! The divinity of the glorious Reformation, as illustrated in the works of Cranmer, Jewel, Latimer, and Ridley, are in fact the essential doctrines of the gospel, as distinguished from a mere system of moral ethics. It is in proportion only as these great and fundamental truths are clearly understood, and fully, freely, and faithfully declared, that religion can acquire its holy ascendancy over the heart and practice. Moral preaching may produce an external reformation, but it is the gospel alone that can change the heart. The corruption and lost state of man, the mercy of God in Christ, the necessity of a living faith in the Saviour, the office of the Holy Spirit, in his enlightening, converting, and sanctifying influences:—these are the grand themes of the Christian ministry. Whenever they are urged with the prominence that their incalculable importance demands, and accompanied by a divine influence, signal effects will never fail to follow. The careless will be roused, the lover of pleasure become the lover of God, and the oppressed heart find pardon and peace.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, June 8, 1790.

My dear Friend,—Among the many who love and esteem you, there is none who rejoices more in your felicity than myself. Far from blaming, I commend you much for connecting yourself, young as you are, with a well-chosen companion for life. Entering on the state with uncontaminated morals, you have the best possible prospect of happiness, and will be secure against a thousand and ten thousand temptations to which, at an early period of life, in such a Babylon as you must necessarily inhabit, you would otherwise have been exposed. I see it too in the light you do, as likely to be advantageous to you in your profession. Men of business have a better opinion of a candidate for employment, who is married, because he has given bond to the world, as you observe, and to himself, for diligence, industry, and atten-

tion. It is altogether therefore a subject of much congratulation; and mine, to which I add Mrs. Unwin's, is very sincere. Samson, at his marriage, proposed a riddle to the Philistines. I am no Samson, neither are you a Philistine. Yet expound to me the following if you can!

*What are they which stand at a distance from each other, and meet without ever moving?**

Should you be so fortunate as to guess it, you may propose it to the company, when you celebrate your nuptials; and, if you can win thirty changes of raiment by it, as Samson did by his, let me tell you, they will be no contemptible acquisition to a young beginner.

You will not, I hope, forget your way to Weston, in consequence of your marriage, where you and yours will always be welcome. W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

The Lodge, June 14, 1790.

My dear Madam,—I have hardly a scrap of paper belonging to me that is not scribbled over with blank verse: and, taking out your letter from a bundle of others, this moment, I find it thus inscribed on the seal-side:—

Meantime his steeds
Snorted, by Myrmidons detain'd, and loosed
From their own master's chariot, foam'd to fly.

You will easily guess to what they belong; and I mention the circumstance merely in proof of my perpetual engagement to Homer, whether at home or abroad: for, when I committed these lines to the back of your letter, I was rambling at a considerable distance from home. I set one foot on a mole-hill, placed my hat, with the crown upward, on my knee, laid your letter upon it, and with a pencil wrote the fragment that I have sent you. In the same posture I have written many and many a passage of a work which I hope soon to have done with. But all this is foreign to what I intended when I first took pen in hand. My purpose then was, to excuse my long silence as well as I could, by telling you that I am, at present, not only a laborer in verse, but in prose also, having been requested by a friend, to whom I could not refuse it, to translate for him a series of Latin letters, received from a Dutch minister of the Cape of Good Hope.‡ With this additional occupation you will be sensible that my hands are full; and it is a truth that, except to yourself, I would, just at this time, have written to nobody.

I felt a true concern for what you told me in your last, respecting the ill state of health of your much-valued friend, Mr. Martyn. You say, if I knew half his worth, I should, with you, wish his longer continuance below. Now you must understand, that, ignorant as I am of Mr. Martyn, except by your report of him, I do nevertheless sincerely wish it—and that, both for your sake and my own; nor less for the sake of the public.* For your sake, because you love and esteem him highly; for the sake of the public, because, should it please God to take him before he has completed his great botanical work, I suppose no other person will be able to finish it so well; and for my own sake, because I know he has a kind and favorable opinion beforehand of my translation, and, consequently, should it justify his prejudice when it appears, he will stand my friend against an army of Cambridge critics. It would have been strange indeed if *self* had not peeped out on this subject. I beg you will present my best respects to him, and assure him that, were it possible he could visit Weston, I should be most happy to receive him.

Mrs. Unwin would have been employed in transcribing my rhymes for you, would her health have permitted; but it is very seldom that she can write without being much a sufferer by it. She has almost a constant pain in her side, which forbids it. As soon as it leaves her, or much abates, she will be glad to work for you.

I am, like you and Mr. King, an admirer of clouds, but only when there are blue intervals, and pretty wide ones too, between them. One cloud is too much for me, but a hundred are not too many. So with this riddle and with my best respects to Mr. King, to which I add Mrs. Unwin's to you both,—I remain, my dear madam,

Truly yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 17, 1790.

My dear Coz.,—Here am I, at eight in the morning, in full dress, going a-visiting to Chicheley. We are a strong party, and fill two chaises; Mrs. F. the elder, and Mrs. G. in one; Mrs. F. the younger, and myself in another. Were it not that I shall find Chesters at the end of my journey, I should be inconsolable. That expectation alone supports my spirits: and, even with this pros-

* This enigma is explained in a subsequent letter.

† Private correspondence.

‡ The Dutch minister here mentioned, was Mr. Van Lier, who recorded the remarkable account of the great spiritual change produced in his mind, by reading the works of Mr. Newton. The letters were written in Latin, and translated by Cowper, at the request of his clerical friend.

* Professor Martyn lived to an advanced old age, endeared to his family, respected and esteemed by the public, and supported in his last moments by the consolations and hopes of the gospel.

pect before me, when I saw this moment a poor old woman coming up the lane, opposite my window, I could not help sighing, and saying to myself, "Poor, but happy old woman! Thou art exempted by thy situation in life from riding in chaises, and making thyself fine in a morning: happier therefore in my account than I, who am under the cruel necessity of doing both. Neither dost thou write verses, neither hast thou ever heard of the name of Homer, whom I am miserable to abandon for a whole morning!" This, and more of the same sort, passed in my mind on seeing the old woman abovesaid.

The troublesome business with which I filled my last letter is, I hope, by this time concluded, and Mr. Archdeacon satisfied. I can, to be sure, but ill afford to pay fifty pounds for another man's negligence, but would be happy to pay a hundred rather than be treated as if I were insolvent; threatened with attorneys and bums. One would think that, living where I live, I might be exempted from trouble. But alas! as the philosophers often affirm, there is no nook under heaven in which trouble cannot enter; and perhaps, had there never been one philosopher in the world, this is a truth that would not have been always altogether a secret.

I have made two inscriptions lately, at the request of Thomas Gifford, Esq., who is sowing twenty acres with acorns on one side of his house, and twenty acres with ditto on the other.* He erects two memorials of stone on the occasion, that, when posterity shall be curious to know the age of the oaks, their curiosity may be gratified.

1.

INSCRIPTION.

Other stones the era tell
When some feeble mortal fell.
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.
Anno 1790.

2.

INSCRIPTION.

Reader! Behold a monument
That asks no sigh or tear,
Though it perpetuate the event
Of a great burial here.
Anno 1791.

My works therefore will not all perish, or will not all perish soon, for he has ordered his lapidary to cut the characters very deep, and in stone extremely hard. It is not in vain, then, that I have so long exercised the business of a poet. I shall at last reap the reward of my labors, and be immortal probably for many years.

Ever thine, W. C.

* At Chillington, Bucks.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, June 22, 1790.

My dear Friend,— . . .

. . . . . .

Villoison makes no mention of the serpent, whose skin or bowels, or perhaps both, were honored with the Iliad and the Odyssey inscribed upon them. But I have conversed with a living eye-witness of an African serpent long enough to have afforded skin and guts for the purpose. In Africa there are ants also which frequently destroy these monsters. They are not much larger than ours, but they travel in a column of immense length, and eat through everything that opposes them. Their bite is like a spark of fire. When these serpents have killed their prey, lion or tiger, or any other large animal, before they swallow him, they take a considerable circuit round about the carcass, to see if the ants are coming, because, when they have gorged their prey, they are unable to escape them. They are nevertheless sometimes surprised by them in their unwieldy state, and the ants make a passage through them. Now if you thought your own story of Homer, bound in snake-skin, worthy of three notes of admiration, you cannot do less than add six to mine, confessing at the same time, that, if I put you to the expense of a letter, I do not make you pay your money for nothing. But this account I had from a person of most unimpeached veracity.

I rejoice with you in the good Bishop's removal to St. Asaph,* and especially because the Norfolk parsons much more resemble the ants above-mentioned than he the serpent. He is neither of vast size, nor unwieldy, nor voracious; neither, I dare say, does he sleep after dinner, according to the practice of the said serpent. But, harmless as he is, I am mistaken if his mutinous clergy did not sometimes disturb his rest, and if he did not find their bite, though they could not actually eat through him, in a degree resembling fire. Good men like him, and peaceable, should have good and peaceable folks to deal with; and I heartily wish him such in his new diocese. But if he will keep the clergy to their business, he shall have trouble, let him go where he may; and this is boldly spoken, considering that I speak it to one of that reverend body. But ye are like Jeremiah's basket of figs: some of you cannot be better, and some of you are stark naught. Ask the bishop himself if this be not true.

W. C.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

Weston, June 29, 1790.

My dearest Cousin,—It is true that I did sometimes complain to Mrs. Unwin of your

* Dr. Lewis Bagot, previously Bishop of Norwich.

long silence. But it is likewise true that I made many excuses for you in my own mind, and did not feel myself at all inclined to be angry, not even much to wonder. There is an awkwardness and a difficulty in writing to those whom distance and length of time have made in a manner new to us, that naturally gives us a check, when you would otherwise be glad to address them. But a time, I hope, is near at hand when you and I shall be effectually delivered from all such constraints, and correspond as fluently as if our intercourse had suffered much less interruption.

You must not suppose, my dear, that though I may be said to have lived many years with a pen in my hand, I am myself altogether at my ease on this tremendous occasion. Imagine rather, and you will come nearer the truth, that when I placed this sheet before me, I asked myself more than once, "How shall I fill it? One subject indeed presents itself, the pleasant prospect that opens upon me of our coming once more together: but, that once exhausted, with what shall I proceed?" Thus I questioned myself; but finding neither end nor profit of such questions, I bravely resolved to dismiss them all at once, and to engage in the great enterprise of a letter to my quondam Rose at a venture. There is great truth in a rant of Nat Lee's, or of Dryden's, I know not which, who makes an enamoured youth say to his mistress,

And nonsense shall be eloquence in love.

For certain it is, that they who truly love one another are not very nice examiners of each other's style or matter; if an epistle comes, it is always welcome, though it be perhaps neither so wise, nor so witty, as one might have wished to make it. And now, my cousin, let me tell thee how much I feel myself obliged to Mr. Bodham for the readiness he expresses to accept my invitation. Assure him that, stranger as he is to me at present, and natural as the dread of strangers has ever been to me, I shall yet receive him with open arms, because he is your husband, and loves you dearly. That consideration alone will endear him to me, and I dare say that I shall not find it his only recommendation to my best affections. May the health of his relation (his mother, I suppose) be soon restored, and long continued, and may nothing melancholy, of what kind soever, interfere to prevent our joyful meeting. Between the present moment and September our house is clear for your reception, and you have nothing to do but to give us a day or two's notice of your coming. In September we expect Lady Hesketh, and I only regret that our house is not large enough to hold all together, for, were it possible that you could meet, you would love each other.

Mrs. Unwin bids me offer you her best love. She is never well, but always patient and always cheerful, and feels beforehand that she shall be loath to part with you.

My love to all the dear Donnes of every name!—write soon, no matter about what.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, July 7, 1790.

Instead of beginning with the saffron-vested morning, to which Homer invites me, on a morning that has no saffron vest to boast, I shall begin with you.

It is irksome to us both to wait so long as we must for you, but we are willing to hope that by a longer stay you will make us amends for all this tedious procrastination.

Mrs. Unwin has made known her whole case to Mr. Gregson, whose opinion of it has been very consolatory to me. He says indeed it is a case perfectly out of the reach of all physical aid, but at the same time not at all dangerous. Constant pain is a sad grievance, whatever part is affected, and she is hardly ever free from an aching head, as well as an uneasy side, but patience is an anodyne of God's own preparation, and of that he gives her largely.

The French, who like all lively folks are extreme in everything, are such in their zeal for freedom, and if it were possible to make so noble a cause ridiculous, their manner of promoting it could not fail to do so. Princes and peers reduced to plain gentlemanship, and gentles reduced to a level with their own lacqueys, are excesses of which they will repent hereafter.* Difference of rank and subordination are, I believe of God's appointment, and consequently essential to the well-being of society: but what we mean by fanaticism in religion is exactly that which animates their politics, and unless time should sober them, they will, after all, be an unhappy people. Perhaps it deserves not much to be wondered at, that, at their first escape from tyrannical shackles, they should act extravagantly, and treat their kings as they have sometimes treated their idols. To these however they are reconciled in due time again, but their respect for monarchy is at an end. They want nothing now but a little English sobriety, and that they want extremely. I heartily wish them some wit in their anger, for it were great pity that so many millions should be miserable for want of it.

* The distinctions of rank were abolished during the French Revolution, and the title of citizen considered to be the only legal and honorable appellation.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, July 8, 1790.

My dear Johnny,—You do well to perfect yourself on the violin. Only beware that an amusement so very bewitching as music, especially when we produce it ourselves, do not steal from you ALL those hours that should be given to study. I can be well content that it should serve you as a refreshment after severer exercises, but not that it should engross you wholly. Your own good sense will most probably dictate to you this precaution, and I might have spared you the trouble of it, but I have a degree of zeal for your proficiency in more important pursuits, that would not suffer me to suppress it.

Having delivered my conscience by giving you this sage admonition, I will convince you that I am a censor not over and above severe, by acknowledging in the next place that I have known very good performers on the violin, very learned also; and my cousin, Dr. Spencer Madan, is an instance.

I am delighted that you have engaged your sister to visit us; for I say to myself, if John be amiable what must Catharine be? For we males, be we angelic as we may, are always surpassed by the ladies. But know this, that I shall not be in love with either of you, if you stay with us only a few days, for you talk of a week or so. Correct this erratum, I beseech you, and convince us, by a much longer continuance here, that it was one. W. C.

Mrs. Unwin has never been well since you saw her. You are not passionately fond of letter-writing, I perceive, who have dropped a lady; but you will be a loser by the bargain; for one letter of hers, in point of real utility and sterling value, is worth twenty of mine, and you will never have another from her till you have earned it.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, July 16, 1790.

My dear Madam,—Taking it for granted that this will find you at Perten-hall, I follow you with an early line and a hasty one, to tell you how much we rejoice to have seen yourself and Mr. King; and how much regret you have left behind you. The wish that we expressed when we were together, Mrs. Unwin and I have more than once expressed since your departure, and have always felt it—that it had pleased Providence to appoint our habitations nearer to each other. This is a life of wishes, and they only are happy who have arrived where wishes cannot enter. We shall live now in hope of a second meeting and a longer interview; which, if it please God to continue to you and to Mr. King your present measure of health, you will be able, I trust, to contrive hereafter. You did not leave us without encouragement to expect it; and I know that you do not raise expectations but with a sincere design to fulfil them.

Nothing shall be wanting, on our part, to accomplish in due time a journey to Perten-hall. But I am a strange creature, who am less able than any man living to project anything out of the common course, with a reasonable prospect of performance. I have singularities, of which, I believe, at present you know nothing; and which would fill you with wonder, if you knew them. I will add, however, in justice to myself, that they would not lower me in your good opinion; though, perhaps, they might tempt you to question the soundness of my upper story. Almost twenty years have I been thus unhappily circumstanced; and the remedy is in the hand of God only. That I make you this partial communication on the subject, conscious, at the same time, that you are well worthy to be entrusted with the whole, is merely because the recital would be too long for a letter, and painful both to me and to you. But all this may vanish in a moment; and, if it please God, it shall. In the meantime, my dear madam, remember me in your prayers, and mention me at those times, as one whom it has pleased God to afflict with singular visitations.

How I regret, for poor Mrs. Unwin's sake, your distance! She has no friend suitable as you to her disposition and character, in all the neighborhood. Mr. King, too, is just the friend and companion with whom I could be happy; but such grow not in this country. Pray tell him that I remember him with much esteem and regard; and believe me, my dear madam, with the sincerest affection,

Yours entirely, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, July 31, 1790.

You have by this time, I presume, answered Lady Hesketh's letter? If not, answer it without delay, and this injunction I give you, judging that it may not be entirely unnecessary, for, though I have seen you but once, and only for two or three days, I have found out that you are a scatter-brain.* I made the discovery perhaps the sooner, because in this you very much resemble myself, who, in the course of my life, through mere carelessness and inattention, lost many advantages; an insuperable shyness has also deprived me of many. And here again there

* Private correspondence.

* This title was not long merited.

is a resemblance between us. You will do well to guard against both, for of both, I believe, you have a considerable share as well as myself.

We long to see you again, and are only concerned at the short stay you propose to make with us. If time should seem to you as short at Weston, as it seems to us, your visit here will be gone "as a dream when one awaketh, or as a watch in the night."

It is a life of dreams, but the pleasantest one naturally wishes longest.

I shall find employment for you, having made already some part of the fair copy of the Odyssey a foul one. I am revising it for the last time, and spare nothing that I can mend. The Iliad is finished.

If you have Donne's poems, bring them with you, for I have not seen them many years, and should like to look them over.*

You may treat us too, if you please, with a little of your music, for I seldom hear any, and delight much in it. You need not fear a rival, for we have but two fiddles in the neighborhood—one a gardener's, the other a tailor's: terrible performers both!

W. C.

Mrs. Newton was at this time in very declining health. It is to this subject that Cowper alludes in the following letter.

* Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, and Chaplain to King James the First, belonged to that class of writers, whom Johnson, in his Life of Cowley, describes as metaphysical poets. Their great object seemed to be to display their wit and learning, and to astonish by what was brilliant, rather than to please by what was natural and simple. Notwithstanding this defect, the poetry of Donne, though harsh and unmusical, abounds in powerful thoughts, and discovers a considerable share of learning. His divinity was drawn from the pure fountain of Revelation, of which he drank copiously and freely. Of his fervent zeal and piety, many instances are recorded in that inimitable piece of biography, Izaak Walton's Lives. We subjoin a specimen of his poetry, composed during a severe fit of sickness, and which, on his recovery, was set to music, and used to be often sung to the organ by the choristers of St. Paul's, in his own hearing.

HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER.

1.

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

2.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

3.

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself that, at my death, thy Son
Shall shine, as he shines now, and heretofore.
And having done that thou hast done,
I fear no more.

Divine Poems.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

The Lodge, Aug. 11, 1790.

My dear Friend,—That I may not seem unreasonably tardy in answering your last kind letter, I steal a few minutes from my customary morning business, (at present the translation of Mr. Van Lier's Narrative,) to inform you that I received it safe from the hands of Judith Hughes, whom we met in the middle of Hill-field. Desirous of gaining the earliest intelligence possible concerning Mrs. Newton, we were going to call on her, and she was on her way to us. It grieved us much that her news on that subject corresponded so little with our earnest wishes of Mrs. Newton's amendment. But if Dr. Benamer† still gives hope of her recovery, it is not, I trust, without substantial reason for doing so; much less can I suppose that he would do it contrary to his own persuasions, because a thousand reasons, that must influence, in such a case, the conduct of a humane and sensible physician, concur to forbid it. If it shall please God to restore her, no tidings will give greater joy to us. In the meantime, it is our comfort to know, that in any event you will be sure of supports invaluable, and that cannot fail you; though, at the same time, I know well that, with your feelings, and especially on so affecting a subject, you will have need of the full exercise of all your faith and resignation. To a greater trial no man can be called, than that of being a helpless eye-witness of the sufferings of one he loves and loves tenderly. This I know by experience; but it is long since I had any experience of those communications from above, which alone can enable us to acquit ourselves, on such an occasion, as we ought. But it is otherwise with you, and I rejoice that it is so.

With respect to my own initiation into the secret of animal magnetism, I have a thousand doubts. Twice, as you know, I have been overwhelmed with the blackest despair; and at those times everything in which I have been at any period of my life concerned has afforded to the enemy a handle against me. I tremble, therefore, almost at every step I take, lest on some future similar occasion it should yield him opportunity, and furnish him with means to torment me. Decide for me, if you can; and in the meantime, present, if you please, my respectful compliments and very best thanks to Mr. Holloway, for his most obliging offer.‡ I am, perhaps, the only man living who would hesitate a moment, whether, on such easy terms, he should

* Private correspondence.

† Dr. Benamer was a pious and excellent man, whose house was the resort of religious persons at that time, who went there for the purpose of edification. Mr. Newton was a regular attendant on these occasions.

‡ Newton had suggested the propriety of Cowper trying the effect of animal magnetism, in the hopes of mitigating his disorder, but he declined the offer.

or should not accept it. But if he finds another like me, he will make a greater discovery than even that which he has already made of the principles of this wonderful art. For I take it for granted, that he is the gentleman whom you once mentioned to me as indebted only to his own penetration for the knowledge of it.

I shall proceed, you may depend on it, with all possible despatch in your business. Had it fallen into my hands a few months later, I should have made a quicker riddance; for, before the autumn shall be ended, I hope to have done with Homer. But my first morning hour or two (now and then a letter which must be written excepted) shall always be at your service till the whole is finished.

Commending you and Mrs. Newton, with all the little power I have of that sort, to His fatherly and tender care in whom you have both believed, in which friendly office I am fervently joined by Mrs. Unwin, I remain, with our sincere love to you both, and to Miss Catlett, my dear friend, most affectionately yours, W. C.

The termination of a laborious literary untertaking is an eventful period in an author's life. The following letter announces the termination of Cowper's Homeric version, and its conveyance to the press.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

Weston, Sept. 9, 1790.

My dearest Cousin,—I am truly sorry to be forced after all to resign the hope of seeing you and Mr. Bodham at Weston this year; the next may possibly be more propitious, and I heartily wish it may. Poor Catharine's* unseasonable indisposition has also cost us a disappointment which we much regret. And, were it not that Johnny has made shift to reach us, we should think ourselves completely unfortunate. But him we have, and him we will hold as long as we can, so expect not very soon to see him in Norfolk. He is so harmless, cheerful, gentle, and good-tempered, and I am so entirely at my ease with him, that I cannot surrender him without a *needs must*, even to those who have a superior claim upon him. He left us yesterday morning, and whither do you think he is gone, and on what errand? Gone, as sure as you are alive, to London, and to convey my Homer to the bookseller's. But he will return the day after to-morrow, and I mean to part with him no more till necessity shall force us asunder. Suspect me not, my cousin, of being such a monster as to have imposed this task myself on your kind nephew, or even to have thought of doing it. It happened that one day, as we chatted by the fireside, I expressed a wish that I could hear of some trusty body going to London, to whose care I might consign my voluminous labors, the work of five years. For I purpose never to visit that city again myself, and should have been uneasy to have left a charge, of so much importance to me, altogether to the care of a stage-coachman. Johnny had no sooner heard my wish than, offering himself to the service, he fulfilled it; and his offer was made in such terms, and accompanied with a countenance and manner expressive of so much alacrity, that, unreasonable as I thought it at first to give him so much trouble, I soon found that I should mortify him by a refusal. He is gone therefore with a box full of poetry, of which I think nobody will plunder him. He has only to say what it is, and there is no commodity I think a freebooter would covet less.

W. C.

* The Rev. J. Johnson's sister.

The marriage of his friend, Mr. Rose, was too interesting an event not to claim Cowper's warm congratulations.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Sept. 13, 1790.

My dear Friend,—Your letter was particularly welcome to me, not only because it came after a long silence, but because it brought me good news—news of your marriage, and consequently, I trust, of your happiness. May that happiness be durable as your lives, and may you be the *Felices ter et amplius* of whom Horace sings so sweetly! This is my sincere wish, and, though expressed in prose, shall serve as your epithalamium. You comfort me when you say that your marriage will not deprive us of the sight of you hereafter. If you do not wish that I should regret your union, you must make that assurance good as often as you have opportunity.

After perpetual versification during five years, I find myself at last a vacant man, and reduced to read for my amusement. My Homer is gone to the press, and you will imagine that I feel a void in consequence. The proofs however will be coming soon, and I shall avail myself with all my force, of this last opportunity to make my work as perfect as I wish it. I shall not therefore be long time destitute of employment, but shall have sufficient to keep me occupied all the winter and part of the ensuing spring, for Johnson purposes to publish either in March, April, or May—my very preface is finished. It did not cost me much trouble, being neither long nor learned. I have spoken my mind as freely as decency would permit on the subject of Pope's version, allowing him at the same time all the

merit to which I think him entitled. I have given my reasons for translating in blank verse, and hold some discourse on the mechanism of it, chiefly with a view to obviate the prejudices of some people against it. I expatiate a little on the manner in which I think Homer ought to be rendered, and in which I have endeavored to render him myself, and anticipated two or three cavils to which I foresee that I shall be liable from the ignorant or uncandid, in order, if possible, to prevent them. These are the chief heads of my preface, and the whole consists of about twelve pages.

It is possible, when I come to treat with Johnson about the copy, I may want some person to negotiate for me, and knowing no one so intelligent as yourself in books, or so well qualified to estimate their just value, I shall beg leave to resort to and rely on you as my negotiator. But I will not trouble you unless I should see occasion. My cousin was the bearer of my MSS. to London. He went on purpose, and returns to-morrow. Mrs. Unwin's affectionate felicitations added to my own, conclude me,

Dear friend,
Sincerely yours, W. C.

The trees of a colonnade will solve my riddle.*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.†

The Lodge, Sept 17, 1790.

My dear Friend,—I received last night a copy of my subscribers' names from Johnson, in which I see how much I have been indebted to yours and to Mrs. Hill's solicitations. Accept my best thanks, so justly due to you both. It is an illustrious catalogue, in respect of rank and title, but methinks I should have liked it as well had it been more numerous. The sum subscribed, however, will defray the expense of printing, which is as much as, in these unsubscribing days, I had any reason to promise myself. I devoutly second your droll wish, that the booksellers may contend about me. The more the better: seven times seven, if they please; and let them fight with the fury of Achilles,

Till ev'ry rubric-post be crimson'd o'er
With blood of booksellers, in battle slain
For me, and not a periwig untorn.

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

Weston, Oct. 5, 1790.

My dear Madam,—I am truly concerned that you have so good an excuse for your silence. Were it proposed to my choice, whether you should omit to write through illness or indifference to me, I should be selfish enough, perhaps, to find decision difficult for a few moments; but have such an opinion at the same time of my affection for you, as to be verily persuaded that I should at last make a right option, and wish you rather to forget me than to be afflicted. But there is One wiser and more your friend than I can possibly be, who appoints all your sufferings, and who, by a power altogether his own, is able to make them good for you.

I wish heartily that my verses had been more worthy of the counterpane, their subject.* The gratitude I felt when you brought it, and gave it to me, might have inspired better; but a head full of Homer, I find by sad experience, is good for little else. Lady Hesketh, who is here, has seen your gift, and pronounced it the most beautiful and best executed of the kind she ever saw.

I have lately received from my bookseller a copy of my subscribers' names, and do not find among them the name of Mr. Professor Martyn. I mention it because you informed me, some time since, of his kind intention to number himself among my encouragers on this occasion, and because I am unwilling to lose, for want of speaking in time, the honor that his name will do me. It is possible, too, that he may have subscribed, and that his non-appearance may be owing merely to Johnson's having forgot to enter his name. Perhaps you will have an opportunity to ascertain the matter. The catalogue will be printed soon, and published in the "Analytical Review," as the last and most effectual way of advertising my translation, and the name of the gentleman in question will be particularly serviceable to me in the first edition of it.

My whole work is in the bookseller's hands, and ought by this time to be in the press. The next spring is the time appointed for the publication. It is a genial season, when people who are ever good-tempered at all are sure to be so; a circumstance well worthy of an author's attention, especially of mine, who am just going to give a thump on the outside of the critics' hive, that will probably alarm them all.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, is on the whole rather improved in her health since we had the pleasure of your short visit; I should say the pleasure of your visit, and the pain of its shortness. I am, my dearest madam,

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

The Lodge, Oct. 15, 1790.

My dear Friend,—We were surprised and

* What are they which stand at a distance from each other, and meet without ever moving?

† Private correspondence.

* Mrs. King presented the poet with a counterpane, in patch-work, of her own making. In acknowledgment, he addressed to her the verses beginning,

"The bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quicken'd by a call," &c. &c.

† Private correspondence.

grieved at Mrs. Scott's* sudden departure: grieved, you may suppose, not for *her*, but for *him*, whose loss, except that in God he has an all-sufficient good, is irreparable. The day of separation between those who have loved long and well is an awful day, inasmuch as it calls the Christian's faith and submission to the severest trial. Yet I account those happy, who, if they are severely tried, shall yet be supported, and carried safely through. What would become of me on a similar occasion! I have one comfort, and only one; bereft of that, I should have nothing left to lean on; for my spiritual props have been long struck from under me.

I have no objection at all to being known as the translator of Van Lier's Letters when they shall be published. Rather, I am ambitious of it as an honor. It will serve to prove, that, if I have spent much time to little purpose in the translation of Homer, some small portion of my time has, however, been well disposed of.

The honor of your preface prefixed to my poems will be on my side; for surely to be known as the friend of a much-favored minister of God's word is a more illustrious distinction, in reality, than to have the friendship of any poet in the world to boast of.

We sympathize truly with you under all your tender concern for Mrs. Newton, and with her in all her sufferings from such various and discordant maladies. Alas! what a difference have twenty-three years made in us and in our condition! for just so long is it since Mrs. Unwin and I came into Buckinghamshire. Yesterday was the anniversary of that memorable era. Farewell. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

The Lodge, Oct. 26, 1790.

My dear Friend,—We should have been happy to have received from you a more favorable account of Mrs. Newton's health. Yours is indeed a post of observation, and of observation the most interesting. It is well that you are enabled to bear the stress and intenseness of it without prejudice to your own health, or impediment to your ministry.

The last time I wrote to Johnson, I made known to him your wishes to have your preface printed, and affixed, as soon as an opportunity shall offer; expressing, at the same time, my own desires to have it done.† Whether I shall have any answer to my proposal is a matter of much uncertainty; for he is always either too idle or too busy, I know not which, to write to me. Should you happen to pass his way, perhaps it would not be amiss to speak to him on the subject; for it is easier to carry a point by six words spoken, than by writing as many sheets about it. I have asked him hither, when my cousin Johnson shall leave us, which will be in about a fortnight; and should he come will enforce the measure myself.

A yellow shower of leaves is falling continually from all the trees in the country. A few moments only seem to have passed since they were buds; and in a few moments more they will have disappeared. It is one advantage of a rural situation, that it affords many hints of the rapidity with which life flies, that do not occur in towns and cities. It is impossible for a man conversant with such scenes as surround me, not to advert daily to the shortness of his existence here, admonished of it, as he must be, by ten thousand objects. There was a time when I could contemplate my present state, and consider myself as a thing of a day with pleasure; when I numbered the seasons as they passed in swift rotation, as a schoolboy numbers the days that interpose between the next vacation, when he shall see his parents, and enjoy his home again. But to make so just an estimate of a life like this is no longer in my power. The consideration of my short continuance here, which was once grateful to me, now fills me with regret. I would live and live always, and am become such another wretch as Mæcenas was, who wished for long life, he cared not at what expense of sufferings. The only consolation left me on this subject is, that the voice of the Almighty can in one moment cure me of this mental infirmity. That he can, I know by experience; and there are reasons for which I ought to believe that he will. But from hope to despair is a transition that I have made so often, that I can only consider the hope that may come, and that sometimes I believe will, as a short prelude of joy to a miserable conclusion of sorrow that shall never end. Thus are my brightest prospects clouded, and thus, to me, is hope itself become like a withered flower, that has lost both its hue and its fragrance.

I ought not to have written in this dismal strain to you, in your present trying situation, nor did I intend it. You have more need to be cheered than to be saddened; but a dearth of other themes constrained me to

* The wife of the Rev. Thomas Scott, the author of one of the best Commentaries on the Bible ever published. Mr. Scott was preacher at the Lock Hospital at this time.

† Private correspondence.

‡ We here subjoin the letter which Cowper addressed to Johnson, the bookseller, on this occasion.

Weston, Oct. 3, 1790.

Mr. Newton having again requested that the Preface which he wrote for my first volume may be prefixed to it, I am desirous to gratify him in a particular that so emphatically bespeaks his friendship for me; and, should my books see another edition, shall be obliged to you if you will add it accordingly. W. C.

choose myself for a subject, and of myself I can write no otherwise.

Adieu, my dear friend. We are well: and, notwithstanding all that I have said, I am myself as cheerful as usual. Lady Hesketh is here, and in her company even I, except now and then for a moment, forget my sorrows.

I remain sincerely yours, W. C.

The purport of this letter is painful, but it is explained by the peculiarity of Cowper's case. The state of mind which the Christian *ought to realize*, should be a willingness to remain or to depart, as may seem best to the supreme Disposer of events; though the predominating feeling (where there is an assured and lively hope) will be that of the apostle, viz., that "to be with Christ is far better." The question is, how is this lively hope and assurance to be obtained? How is the sense of guilt, and the fear of death and judgment, to be overcome? The Gospel proclaims the appointed remedy. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."* "I, even I, am He, which blotteth out all thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."† "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins."‡ The cordial reception of this great gospel truth into the heart, the humble reliance upon God's pardoning mercy, through the blood of the cross, will, by the grace of God, infallibly lead to inward joy and peace. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."§ The same divine grace that assures peace to the conscience, will also change and renew the heart, and plant within it those holy principles and affections that will lead to newness of life. The promise of the blood to pardon, and the Spirit to teach and to sanctify, are the two great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.‖

TO MRS. BODHAM.

Weston, Nov. 21, 1790.

My dear Coz.,—Our kindness to your nephew is no more than he must entitle himself to wherever he goes. His amiable disposition and manners will never fail to secure him a warm place in the affection of all who know him. The advice I gave respecting his poem on Audley End was dictated by my love of him, and a sincere desire of his success. It is one thing to write what may please our friends, who, because they are such, are apt to be a little biassed in our favor; and another to write what may please everybody; because they who have no connexion or even knowledge of the author will be sure to find fault if they can. My advice, however, salutary and necessary as it seemed to me, was such as I dare not have given to a poet of less diffidence than he. Poets are to a proverb irritable, and he is the only one I ever knew who seems to have no spark of that fire about him. He has left us about a fortnight, and sorry we were to lose him; but had he been my son he must have gone, and I could not have regretted him more. If his sister be still with you, present my love to her, and tell her how much I wish to see them at Weston together.

Mrs. Hewitt probably remembers more of my childhood than I can recollect either of hers or my own; but this I recollect, that the days of that period were happy days compared with most I have seen since. There are few, perhaps, in the world, who have not cause to look back with regret on the days of infancy; yet, to say, the truth, I suspect some deception in this. For infancy itself has its cares, and though we cannot now conceive how trifles could affect us much, it is certain that they did. Trifles they appear now, but such they were not then.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

(MY BIRTH-DAY.)

Weston, Friday, Nov. 26, 1790.

My dearest Johnny,—I am happy that you have escaped from the claws of Euclid into the bosom of Justinian. It is useful, I suppose, to *every* man to be well grounded in the principles of jurisprudence, and I take it to be a branch of science that bids much fairer to enlarge the mind, and give an accuracy of reasoning, than all the mathematics in the world. Mind your studies, and you will soon be wiser than I can hope to be.

We had a visit on Monday from one of the first women in the world; in point of character, I mean, and accomplishments, the dowager Lady Spencer!* I may receive, perhaps, some honors hereafter, should my translation speed according to my wishes, and the pains I have taken with it; but shall never receive any that I shall esteem so highly. She is indeed worthy to whom I should dedicate, and, may but my Odyssey prove as worthy of her, I shall have nothing to fear from the critics.

Yours, my dear Johnny,
With much affection, W. C.

* John i. 29. † Isaiah xliii. 25.
‡ 1 John ii. 1, 2. § Rom. v. 1, 2.
‖ 1 John i. 7. Isaiah lxi. 1—3. Luke ii. 9—13. John xvi. 16, 17.

* The mother of the late Earl Spencer, and of the Duchess of Devonshire, and the person to whom he dedicated his version of the Odyssey.

TO MRS. KING.*

The Lodge, Nov. 29, 1790.

My dear Madam,—I value highly, as I ought and hope that I always shall, the favorable opinion of such men as Mr. Martyn: though, to say the truth, their commendations, instead of making me proud, have rather a tendency to humble me, conscious as I am that I am overrated. There is an old piece of advice, given by an ancient poet and satirist, which it behoves every man who stands well in the opinion of others to lay up in his bosom:—*Take care to be what you are reported to be.* By due attention to this wise counsel, it is possible to turn the praises of our friends to good account, and to convert that which might prove an incentive to vanity into a lesson of wisdom. I will keep your good and respectable friend's letter very safely, and restore it to you the first opportunity. I beg, my dear madam, that you will present my best compliments to Mr. Martyn, when you shall either see him next or write to him.

To that gentleman's inquiries I am, doubtless, obliged for the recovery of no small proportion of my subscription-list: for, in consequence of his application to Johnson, and very soon after it, I received from him no fewer than forty-five names, that had been omitted in the list he sent me, and that would probably never have been thought of more. No author, I believe, has a more inattentive or indolent bookseller: but he has everybody's good word for liberality and honesty; therefore I must be content.

The press proceeds at present as well as I can reasonably wish. A month has passed since we began, and I revised this morning the first sheet of the sixth Iliad. Mrs. Unwin begs to add a line from herself, so that I have only room to subjoin my best respects to Mr. King, and to say that I am truly,

My dear madam, yours,

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Nov. 30, 1790.

My dear Friend,—I will confess that I thought your letter somewhat tardy, though, at the same time, I made every excuse for you, except, as it seems, the right. *That* indeed was out of the reach of all possible conjecture. I could not guess that your silence was occasioned by your being occupied with either thieves or thief-takers. Since, however, the cause was such, I rejoice that your labors were not in vain, and that the free-booters who had plundered your friend are safe in limbo. I admire, too, as much as I rejoice in your success, the indefatigable spirit that prompted you to pursue, with such unremitting perseverance, an object not to be reached but at the expense of infinite trouble, and that must have led you into an acquaintance with scenes and characters the most horrible to a mind like yours. I see in this conduct the zeal and firmness of your friendship, to whomsoever professed, and, though I wanted not a proof of it myself, contemplate so unequivocal an indication of what you really are, and of what I always believed you to be, with much pleasure. May you rise from the condition of an humble prosecutor, or witness, to the bench of judgment!

When your letter arrived, it found me with the worst and most obstinate cold that I ever caught. This was one reason why it had not a speedier answer. Another is, that, except Tuesday morning, there is none in the week in which I am not engaged in the last revisal of my translation; the revisal I mean of my proof-sheets. To this business I give myself with an assiduity and attention truly admirable, and set an example, which, if other poets could be apprised of, they would do well to follow. Miscarriages in authorship (I am persuaded) are as often to be ascribed to want of pains-taking as to want of ability.

Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Unwin, and myself, often mention you, and always in terms that, though you would blush to hear them, you need not be ashamed of; at the same time wishing much that you would change our trio into a quartetto.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Dec. 1, 1790.

My dear Friend,—It is plain that you ununderstand trap, as we used to say at school: for you begin with accusing me of long silence, conscious yourself, at the same time, that you have been half a year in my debt, or thereabout. But I will answer your accusations with a boast—with a boast of having intended many a day to write to you again, notwithstanding your long insolvency. Your brother and sister of Chicheley can both witness for me, that, weeks since, I testified such an intention, and, if I did not execute it, it was not for want of good-will, but for want of leisure. When will you be able to glory of such designs, so liberal and magnificent, you who have nothing to do, by your own confession, but to grow fat and saucy? Add to all this, that I have had a violent cold, such as I never have but at the first approach of winter, and such as at that time I seldom escape. A fever accompanied it, and an incessant cough.

You measure the speed of printers, of my printer at least, rather by your own wishes than by any just standard. Mine (I believe) is as nimble a one as falls to the share of poets in general, though not nimble enough

* Private correspondence.

to satisfy either the author or his friends. I told you that my work would go to press in autumn, and so it did. But it had been six weeks in London ere the press began to work upon it. About a month since we began to print, and, at the rate of nine sheets in a fortnight, have proceeded to about the middle of the sixth Iliad. "No further?"—you say. I answer—"No, nor even so far, without much scolding on my part, both at the bookseller and the printer." But courage, my friend! Fair and softly, as we proceed, we shall find our way through at last; and, in confirmation of this hope, while I write this, another sheet arrives. I expect to publish in the spring.

I love and thank you for the ardent desire you express to hear me bruited abroad, *et per ora virùm volitantem.* For your encouragement, I will tell you that I read, myself at least, with wonderful complacence what I have done; and if the world, when it shall appear, do not like it as well as I, we will both say and swear with Fluellin, that "it is an ass and a fool (like you!) and a prating coxcomb."

I felt no ambition of the laurel.* Else, though vainly, perhaps, I had friends who would have made a stir on my behalf on that occasion. I confess that, when I learned the new condition of the office, that odes were no longer required, and that the salary was increased, I felt not the same dislike of it. But I could neither go to court, nor could I kiss hands, were it for a much more valuable consideration. Therefore never expect to hear that royal favors find out me!

Adieu, my dear old friend! I will send you a mortuary copy soon, and in the meantime remain, Ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

The Lodge, Dec. 5, 1790.

My dear Friend,—Sometimes I am too sad, and sometimes too busy to write. Both these causes have concurred lately to keep me silent. But more than by either of these I have been hindered, since I received your last, by a violent cold, which oppressed me during almost the whole month of November.

Your letter effects us with both joy and sorrow: with sorrow and sympathy respecting poor Mrs. Newton, whose feeble and dying state suggests a wish for her release rather than for her continuance; and joy on your account, who are enabled to bear, with so much resignation and cheerful acquiescence in the will of God, the prospect of a loss, which even they who know you best apprehended might prove too much for you. As to Mrs. Newton's interest in the best things, none, intimately acquainted with her as we have been, could doubt it. She doubted it indeed herself; but though it is not our duty to doubt, any more than it is our privilege, I have always considered the self-condemning spirit, to which such doubts are principally owing, as one of the most favorable symptoms of a nature spiritually renewed, and have many a time heard you make the same observation.

[*Torn off.*]

We believe that the best Christian is occasionally subject to doubts and fears: and that they form a part of the great warfare. That it is our privilege and duty to cultivate an habitual sense of peace in the conscience, and that this peace will be enjoyed in proportion as faith is in exercise, and the soul is in communion with God, we fully agree. But who that is acquainted with the inward experiences of the Christian, does not know that there are alternations of joy and fear, of triumph and of depression? The Psalms of David furnish many instances of this fact, as well as the history of the most eminent saints recorded in Scripture. "Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in thee." We conceive these words to be an exemplification of the truth of the case. When, therefore, we hear persons speak of the entire absence of sin and infirmity, and exemption from doubts and fears, we are strongly disposed to believe that they labor under great self-deception, and know little of their own hearts, in thus arguing against the general testimony of the Church of Christ in all ages. A plain and pious Christian once told us of an appropriate remark that he addressed to an individual who professed to be wholly free from any fears on this subject. "If," observed this excellent man, "you have no fears for yourself, you must allow me to entertain some for you."

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 18, 1790.

I perceive myself so flattered by the instances of illustrious success mentioned in your letter, that I feel all the amiable modesty, for which I was once so famous, sensibly giving way to a spirit of vain-glory.

The King's College subscription makes me proud—the effect that my verses have had on your two young friends, the mathematicians, makes me proud, and I am, if possible prouder still of the contents of the letter that you inclosed.

You complained of being stupid, and sent me one of the cleverest letters. I have not complained of being stupid, and sent you one

* The office of Poet Laureat, mentioned in a former letter.

† Private correspondence.

of the dullest. But it is no matter. I never aim at anything above the pitch of every day's scribble, when I write to those I love.

Homer proceeds, my boy! We shall get through it in time, and (I hope) by the time appointed. We are now in the tenth Iliad. I expect the ladies every minute to breakfast. You have their best love. Mine attends the whole army of Donnes at Mattishall Green* assembled. How happy should I find myself, were I but one of the party! My capering days are over. But do you caper for me, that you may give them some idea of the happiness I should feel were I in the midst of them! W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

The Lodge, Dec. 31, 1790.

My dear Madam,—Returning from my walk at half-past three, I found your welcome messenger in the kitchen; and, entering the study, found also the beautiful present with which you had charged him.‡ We have all admired it (for Lady Hesketh was here to assist us in doing so;) and for my own particular, I return your my sincerest thanks, a very inadequate compensation. Mrs. Unwin, not satisfied to send you thanks only, begs your acceptance likewise of a turkey, which, though the figure of it might not much embellish a counterpane, may possibly serve hereafter to swell the dimensions of a feather-bed.

I have lately been visited with an indisposition much more formidable than that which I mentioned to you in my last—a nervous fever; a disorder to which I am subject, and which I dread above all others, because it comes attended by a melancholy perfectly insupportable. This is the first day of my complete recovery, the first in which I have perceived no symptoms of my terrible malady; and the only drawback on this comfort that I feel is the intelligence contained in yours, that neither Mr. King nor yourself are well. I dread always, both for my own health and for that of my friends, the unhappy influences of a year worn out. But, my dear madam, this is the last day of it; and I resolve to hope that the new year shall obliterate all the disagreeables of the old one. I can wish nothing more warmly than that it may prove a propitious year to you.

My poetical operations, I mean of the occasional kind, have lately been pretty much at a stand. I told you, I believe, in my last, that Homer, in the present stage of the process, occupied me more intensely than ever. He still continues to do so, and threatens, till he shall be completely finished, to make all other composition impracticable. I have, however, written the mortuary verses as usual; but the wicked clerk for whom I write them has not yet sent me the impression. I transmit to you the long promised Catharina; and, were it possible that I could transcribe the others, would send them also. There is a way, however, by which I can procure a frank, and you shall not want them long.

I remain, dearest madam,
Ever yonrs, W. C.

We have now the pleasure of introducing to the reader a lady, of whom we should say much, if a sense of propriety did not impose silence upon our pen. The Catharina, recorded by the muse of Cowper, was Miss Stapleton at that time, subsequently married to Mr. George Throckmorton Courtney, and finally Lady Throckmorton, by the decease of the elder brother Sir John. As we cannot impose on the poet the restraint which we are compelled to practise in our own case, we shall beg leave to insert the following verses, written on the occasion of her visit to Weston.

She came—she is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again;
The sun of that moment is set,
And seems to have risen in vain.
Catharina* has fled like a dream—
(So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
But has left a regret and esteem,
That will not so suddenly pass.

The last ev'ning ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria,† and I.
Our progress was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paus'd under many a tree,
And much she was charm'd with a tone,
Less sweet to Maria and me,
Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
Could infuse into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here;
For the close woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than ought that the city can show.

* In Norfolk.

† Private correspondence.

‡ This counterpane is mentioned in a previous letter, dated Oct. 5th, in this year: so that, unless it was taken back and then returned in an improved state, there seems to be some error, that we do not profess to explain.

* Miss Stapleton, afterwards Lady Throckmorton, and the person to whom the present undertaking is dedicated.

† The wife of Sir John Throckmorton.

So it is, when the mind is imbued
With a well-judging taste from above,
Then, whether embellish'd or rude
'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and valleys, diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home,
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam.
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Jan. 4, 1791.

My dear Friend,—You would long since have received an answer to your last, had not the wicked clerk of Northampton delayed to send me the printed copy of my annual dirge, which I waited to enclose. Here it is at last, and much good may it do the readers!*

I have regretted that I could not write sooner, especially because it well became me to reply as soon as possible to your kind inquiries after my health, which has been both better and worse since I wrote last. The cough was cured, or nearly so, when I received your letter, but I have lately been afflicted with a nervous fever, a malady formidable to me above all others, on account of the terror and dejection of spirits that in my case always accompany it. I even look forward, for this reason, to the month now current, with the most miserable apprehensions; for in this month the distemper has twice seized me. I wish to be thankful, however, to the sovereign Dispenser both of health and sickness, that, though I have felt cause enough to tremble, he gives me now encouragement to hope that I may dismiss my fears, and expect, for this January at least, to escape it.

. . . . . .

The mention of quantity reminds me of a remark that I have seen somewhere, possibly in Johnson, to this purport, that, the syllables in our language being neither long nor short, our verse accordingly is less beautiful than the verse of the Greeks or Romans, because requiring less artifice in its construction. But I deny the fact, and am ready to depose on oath, that I find every syllable as distinguishably and clearly, either long or short, in our language, as in any other. I know also, that without an attention to the quantity of our syllables, good verse cannot possibly be written, and that ignorance of this matter is one reason why we see so much that is good for nothing. The movement of a verse is always either shuffling or graceful, according to our management in this particular, and Milton gives almost as many proofs of it in his Paradise Lost as there are lines in the poem. Away, therefore, with all such unfounded observations! I would not give a farthing for many bushels of them—nor you perhaps for this letter. Yet, upon recollection, forasmuch as I know you to be a dear lover of literary gossip, I think it possible you may esteem it highly.

Believe me, my dear friend, most truly yours, W. C.

* See mortuary verses composed on this occasion.

The following letter records the death of Mrs. Newton, the object of so early and lasting an attachment on the part of the Rev. John Newton.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, Jan. 20, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Had you been a man of this world, I should have held myself bound by the law of ceremonies to have sent you long since my tribute of condolence. I have sincerely mourned with you; and though you have lost a wife, and I only a friend, yet do I understand too well the value of such a friend as Mrs. Newton not to have sympathised with you very nearly. But you are not a man of this world; neither can you, who have both the Scripture and the Giver of Scripture to console you, have any need of aid from others, or expect it from such spiritual imbecility as mine. I considered, likewise, that receiving a letter from Mrs. Unwin, you, in fact, received one from myself, with this difference only,—that hers could not fail to be better adapted to the occasion and to your own frame of mind than any that I could send you.

[*Torn off.*]

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Jan. 21, 1791.

I know that you have already been catechised by Lady Hesketh on the subject of your return hither, before the winter shall be over, and shall therefore only say, that if you CAN come, we shall be happy to receive you. Remember also, that nothing can ex-

* Private correspondence.

euse the non-performance of a promise, but absolute necessity! In the meantime, my faith in your veracity is such that I am persuaded you will suffer nothing less than necessity to prevent it. Were you not extremely pleasant to us, and just the sort of youth that suits us, we should neither of us have said half so much, or perhaps a word on the subject.

Yours, my dear Johnny, are vagaries that I shall never see practised by any other; and whether you slap your uncle, or reel as if you were fuddled, or dance in the path before me, all is characteristic of yourself, and therefore to me delightful.* I have hinted to you indeed sometimes, that you should be cautious of indulging antic habits and singularities of all sorts, and young men in general have need enough of such admonition. But yours are a sort of fairy habits, such as might belong to Puck or Robin Goodfellow, and therefore, good as the advice is, I should be half sorry should you take it.

This allowance at least I give you. Continue to take your walks, if walks they may be called, exactly in their present fashion, till you have taken orders! Then indeed, forasmuch as a skipping, curvetting, bounding divine might be a spectacle not altogether seemly, I shall consent to your adoption of a more grave demeanor.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Feb. 5, 1791.

My dear Friend,—My letters to you are all either petitionary, or in the style of acknowledgments and thanks, and such nearly in an alternate order. In my last I loaded you with commissions, for the due discharge of which I am now to say, and say truly, how much I feel myself obliged to you; neither can I stop there, but must thank you likewise for new honors from Scotland, which have left me nothing to wish for from that country; for my list is now, I believe, graced with the subscription of all its learned bodies. I regret only that some of them arrived too late to do honor to my present publication of names. But there are those among them, and from Scotland too, that may give a useful hint perhaps to our own universities. Your very handsome present of Pope's Homer has arrived safe, notwithstanding an accident that befell him by the way. The Hall-servant brought the parcel from Olney, resting it on the pommel of the saddle, and his horse fell with him. Pope was in consequence rolled in the dirt, but being well coated, got no damage. If augurs and soothsayers were not out of fashion, I should have consulted one or two of that order, in hope of learning from them that this fall was ominous. I have found a place for him in the parlor, where he makes a splendid appearance, and where he shall not long want a neighbor, one, who if less popular than himself, shall at least look as big as he. How has it happened that, since Pope did certainly dedicate both Iliad and Odyssey, no dedication is found in this first edition of them?

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Feb. 13, 1791.

I now send you a full and true account of this business. Having learned that your inn at Woburn was the George, we sent Samuel thither yesterday. Mr. Martin, master of the George, told him.*

. . . . .

W. C.

P. S. I cannot help adding a circumstance that will divert you. Martin, having learned from Sam whose servant he was, told him that he had never seen Mr. Cowper, but he had heard him frequently spoken of by the companies that had called at his house; and therefore, when Sam would have paid for his breakfast, would take nothing from him. Who says that fame is only empty breath? On the contrary, it is good ale, and cold beef into the bargain.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston Underwood, Feb. 26, 1791.

My dear Friend,—

It is a maxim of much weight,
Worth cunning o'er and o'er,
He who has Homer to translate,
Had need do nothing more.

But, notwithstanding the truth and importance of this apophthegm, to which I lay claim as the original author of it, it is not equally true that my application to Homer, close as it is, has been the sole cause of my delay to answer you. No. In observing so long a silence I have been influenced much more by a vindictive purpose, a purpose to punish you for your suspicion that I could possibly feel myself hurt or offended by any critical suggestion of yours, that seemed to reflect on the purity of my nonsense verses. Understand, if you please, for the future, that whether I disport myself in Greek or

* These innocent peculiarities were in a less degree retained to the end of life by this truly amiable and interesting man.

* This letter contained the history of a servant's cruelty to a post-horse, which a reader of humanity could not wish to see in print. But the postscript describes so pleasantly the signal influence of a poet's reputation on the spirit of a liberal innkeeper, that it surely ought not to be suppressed.—*Hayley.*

Latin, or in whatsoever other language, you are hereby, henceforth and forever, entitled and warranted to take any liberties with it to which you shall feel yourself inclined, not excepting even the lines themselves, which stand at the head of this letter!

You delight me when you call *blank* verse the English *heroic;* for I have always thought, and often said, that we have no other verse worthy to be so entitled. When you read my preface, you will be made acquainted with my sentiments on this subject pretty much at large, for which reason I will curb my zeal, and say the less about it at present. That Johnson, who wrote harmoniously in rhyme, should have had so defective an ear as never to have discovered any music at all in blank verse, till he heard a particular friend of his reading it, is a wonder never sufficiently to be wondered at. Yet this is true on his own acknowledgment, and amounts to a plain confession, (of which, perhaps, he was not aware when he made it,) that he did not know how to read blank verse himself. In short, he either suffered prejudice to lead him in a string whithersoever it would, or his taste in poetry was worth little. I don't believe he ever read anything of that kind with enthusiasm in his life; and as good poetry cannot be composed without a considerable share of that quality in the mind of the author, so neither can it be read or tasted as it ought to be without it.

I have said all this in the morning fasting, but am soon going to my tea. When, therefore, I shall have told you that we are now, in the course of our printing, in the second book of the Odyssey, I shall only have time to add, that I am, my dear friend,

Most truly yours, W. C.

I think your Latin quotations very applicable to the present state of France. But France is in a situation new and untried before.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 27, 1791.

Now, my dearest Johnny, I must tell thee in few words, how much I love and am obliged to thee for thy affectionate services.

My Cambridge honors are all to be ascribed to you, and to you only. Yet you are but a little man, and a little man, into the bargain, who have kicked the mathematics, their idol, out of your study. So important are the endings which Providence frequently connects with small beginnings. Had you been here, I could have furnished you with much employment; for I have so dealt with your fair MS. in the course of my polishing and improving, that I have almost blotted out the whole. Such, however, as it is, I must now send it to the printer, and he must be content with it, for there is not time to make a fresh copy. We are now printing the second book of the Odyssey.

Should the Oxonians bestow none of their notice on me on this occasion, it will happen singularly enough, that, as Pope received all his University honors in the subscription way from Oxford, and none at all from Cambridge, so I shall have received all mine from Cambridge, and none from Oxford. This is the more likely to be the case, because I understand, that on whatsoever occasion either of those learned bodies thinks fit to move, the other always makes it a point to sit still, thus proving its superiority.

I shall send up your letter to Lady Hesketh in a day or two, knowing that the intelligence contained in it will afford her the greatest pleasure. Know likewise, for your own gratification, that all the Scotch Universities have subscribed, none excepted.

We are all as well as usual; that is to say, as well as reasonable folks expect to be on the crazy side of this frail existence.

I rejoice that we shall so soon have you again at our fireside. W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston, March 2, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I am sick and ashamed of myself that I forgot my promise; but it is actually true that I did forget it. You, however, I did not forget; nor did I forget to wonder and to be alarmed at your silence, being perfectly unconscious of my arrears. All this, together with various other trespasses of mine, must be set down to the account of Homer; and, wherever he is, he is bound to make his apology to all my correspondents, but to you in particular. True it is, that if Mrs. Unwin did not call me from that pursuit, I should forget, in the ardor with which I persevere in it, both to eat, and to drink, and to retire to rest. This zeal has increased in me regularly as I have proceeded, and in an exact ratio, as a mathematician would say, to the progress I have made toward the point at which I have been aiming. You will believe this, when I tell you, that, not contented with my previous labors, I have actually revised the whole work, and have made a thousand alterations in it, since it has been in the press. I have now, however, tolerably well satisfied myself at least, and trust that the printer and I shall trundle along merrily to the conclusion. I expect to correct the proof-sheets of the third book of the Odyssey to day.

Thus it is, as I believe I have said to you before, that you are doomed to hear of noth-

* Private correspondence.

ing but Homer from me. There is less of gallantry than of nature in this proceeding. When I write to you, I think of nothing but the subject that is uppermost, and that uppermost is always Homer. Then I consider that though, as a lady, you have a right to expect other treatment at my hands, you are a lady who has a husband, and that husband an old schoolfellow of mine, and who, I know, interests himself in my success.

I am likely, after all, to gather a better harvest of subscribers at Cambridge than I expected. A little cousin of mine, an undergraduate of Caius College, suggested to me, when he was here in the summer, that it might not be amiss to advertise the work at Merril's the bookseller. I acquieseed in the measure, and at his return he pasted me on a board, and hung me up in the shop, as it has proved in the event, much to my emolument. For many, as I understand, have subscribed in consequence; and, among the rest, several of the College libraries.

I am glad that you have seen the last Northampton dirge, for the rogue of a clerk sent me only half the number of printed copies for which I stipulated with him at first, and they were all expended immediately. The poor man himself is dead now; and whether his successor will continue me in my office, or seek another laureat, has not yet transpired.

I am, dear madam,
Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, March 6, 1791.

After all this ploughing and sowing on the plains of Troy, once fruitful, such at least to my translating predecessor, some harvest, I hope, will arise for me also. My long work has received its last, last touches; and I am now giving my preface its final adjustment. We are in the fourth Odyssey in the course of our printing, and I expect that I and the swallows shall appear together. They have slept all the winter, but I, on the contrary, have been extremely busy. Yet if I can "*virûm volitare per ora*," as swiftly as they through the air, I shall account myself well requited.

Adieu! W. C.

The Rev. James Hurdis, to whom the next letter is adressed, was formerly Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, and considered to have established his claim to the title of poet, by his popular work, "The Village Curate." But there is an observation which has frequently suggested itself to us, in recording the names of writers in the correspondence of Cowper, how few have acquired more than an ephemeral celebrity, and been transmitted to the present day! Authors resemble the waves of the sea, which pass on in quick succession, and engage the eye, till it is diverted by those which follow. Each in its turn yields to a superior impelling force. Some tower above the rest, and yet all by their collective strength and energy, form one grand and mighty expanse of ocean.

Such are the vicissitudes of literature, the effects of competition, and the appetite for novelty, that few productions outlive the generation in which they are written, unless they bear a certain impress of immortality, a character of moral or intellectual superiority. They then survive to every age, and are the property of every country, so long as taste, genius, or religion preserve their empire over mankind.

Cowper, having received an obliging letter from Mr. Hurdis, though not personally acquainted with him, addressed the following reply.

Weston, March 6, 1791.

Sir,—I have always entertained, and have occasionally avowed, a great degree of respect for the abilities of the unknown author of "The Village Curate,"—unknown at that time, but now well known, and not to me only but to many. For, before I was favored with your obliging letter, I knew your name, your place of abode, your profession, and that you had four sisters; all which I neither learned from our bookseller, nor from any of his connexions. You will perceive, therefore, that you are no longer an author *incognito*. The writer indeed of many passages that have fallen from your pen could not long continue so. Let genius, true genius, conceal itself where it may, we may say of it, as the young man in Terence of his beautiful mistress, "*Diu latere non potest.*"

I am obliged to you for your kind offers of service, and will not say that I shall not be troublesome to you hereafter; but at present I have no need to be so. I have within these two days given the very last stroke of my pen to my long translation, and what will be my next career I know not. At any rate we shall not, I hope, hereafter be known to each other as poets only, for your writings have made me ambitious of a nearer approach to you. Your door however will never be opened to me. My fate and fortune have combined with my natural disposition to draw a circle round me, which I cannot pass; nor have I been more than thirteen miles from home these twenty years, and so far very seldom. But you are a younger man, and therefore may not be quite so immoveable; in which case should you choose at any time to move Westonward, you will always find

me happy to receive you; and in the meantime I remain with much respect,

Your most obedient servant, critic, and friend, W. C.

P. S.—I wish to know what you mean to do with "Sir Thomas."* For, though I expressed doubts about his theatrical possibilities, I think him a very respectable person, and, with some improvement, well worthy of being introduced to the public.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, March 10, 1791.

Give my affectionate remembrances to your sisters, and tell them I am impatient to entertain them with my old story new dressed.

I have two French prints hanging in my study, both on Iliad subjects; and I have an English one in the parlor, on a subject from the same poem. In one of the former, Agamemnon addresses Achilles exactly in the attitude of a dancing master turning miss in a minuet: in the latter, the figures are plain, and the attitudes plain also. This is, in some considerable measure, I believe, the difference between my translation and Pope's; and will serve as an exemplification of what I am going to lay before you and the public.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, March, 18, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I give you joy that you are about to receive some more of my elegant prose, and I feel myself in danger of attempting to make it even more elegant than usual, and thereby of spoiling it, under the influence of your commendations. But my old helter-skelter manner has already succeeded so well, that I will not, even for the sake of entitling myself to a still great portion of your praise, abandon it.

I did not call in question Johnson's true spirit of poetry, because he was not qualified to relish blank verse, (though, to tell you the truth, I think that but an ugly symptom,) but, if I did not express it, I meant however to infer it, from the perverse judgment that he has formed of our poets in general; depreciating some of the best, and making honorable mention of others, in my opinion, not undeservedly neglected. I will lay you sixpence that, had he lived in the days of Milton, and by any accident had met with his "Paradise Lost," he would neither have directed the attention of others to it, nor have much admired it himself. Good sense, in short, and strength of intellect, seem to me, rather than a fine taste, to have been his distinguishing characteristics. But should you think otherwise, you have my free permission; for so long as you have yourself a taste for the beauties of Cowper, I care not a fig whether Johnson has a taste or not.

I wonder where you find all your quotations, pat as they are to the present condition of France. Do you make them yourself, or do you actually find them? I am apt to suspect sometimes that you impose them only on a poor man who has but twenty books in the world, and two of them are your brother Chester's. They are, however, much to the purpose, be the author of them who he may.

I was very sorry to learn lately, that my friend at Chichely has been some time indisposed, either with gout or rheumatism, (for it seems to be uncertain which,) and attended by Dr. Kerr. I am at a loss to conceive how so temperate a man should acquire the gout, and am resolved therefore to conclude that it must be the rheumatism, which, bad as it is, is in my judgment the best of the two, and will afford me, besides, some opportunity to sympathize with him, for I am not perfectly exempt from it myself. Distant as you are in situation, you are yet, perhaps, nearer to him in point of intelligence than I, and if you can send me any particular news of him, pray do it in your next.

I love and thank you for your benediction. If God forgive me my sins, surely I shall love him much, for I have much to be forgiven. But the quantum need not discourage me, since there is One, whose atonement can suffice for all.

Τοῦ δὶ καθ' αἷμα ῥέεν, καὶ σοῖ, καὶ ἐμοῖ, καὶ ἀδελφοῖς
Ἡμέτεροις, ἀυτοῦ σωζομένους θανάτῳ.

Accept our joint remembrance, and believe me affectionately yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, March 19, 1791.

My dearest Johnny,—You ask if it may not be improper to solicit Lady Hesketh's subscription to the poems of the Norwich maiden? To which I reply it will be by no means improper. On the contrary, I am persuaded that she will give her name with a very good will: for she is much an admirer of poesy that is worthy to be admired, and such I think, judging by the specimen, the poesy of this maiden, Elizabeth Bentley of Norwich, is likely to prove.

Not that I am myself inclined to expect in general great matters in the poetical way from persons whose ill-fortune it has been to want the common advantages of education: neither do I account it in general a kindness to such to encourage them in the indulgence of a propensity more likely to do them harm in the end, than to advance their interest.

* "Sir Thomas More," a tragedy.

Many such phenomena have arisen within my remembrance, at which all the world has wondered for a season, and has then forgot them.*

The fact is, that though strong natural genius is always accompanied with strong natural tendency to its object, yet it often happens that the tendency is found where the genius is wanting. In the present instance, however, (the poems of a certain Mrs. Leapor excepted, who published some forty years ago,) I discern, I think, more marks of true poetical talent than I remember to have observed in the verses of any other, male or female, so disadvantageously circumstanced. I wish her therefore good speed, and subscribe to her with all my heart.

You will rejoice when I tell you, that I have some hopes, after all, of a harvest from Oxford also; Mr. Throckmorton has written to a person of considerable influence there, which he has desired him to exert in my favor, and *his* request, I should imagine, will hardly prove a vain one.

Adieu. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, March, 24, 1791.

My dear Friend,—You apologize for your silence in a manner which affords me so much pleasure, that I cannot but be satisfied. Let business be the cause, and I am contented. That is the cause to which I would even be accessary myself, and would increase yours by any means, except by a law-suit of my own, at the expense of all your opportunities of writing oftener than twice in a twelvemonth.

Your application to Dr. Dunbar reminds me of two lines to be found somewhere in Dr. Young—

"And now a poet's gratitude you see,
Grant him two favors, and he'll ask for three."

In this particular, therefore, I perceive, that a poet and a poet's friend bear a striking resemblance to each other. The Doctor will bless himself that the number of Scotch universities is not larger, assured that if they equalled those in England in number of colleges, you would give him no rest till he had engaged them all. It is true, as Lady Hesketh told you, that I shall not fear, in the matter of subscriptions, a comparison even with Pope himself; considered (I mean) that we live in days of terrible taxation, and when verse, not being a necessary of life, is accounted dear, be it what it may, even at the lowest price. I am no very good arithmetician, yet I calculated the other day in my morning walk, that my two volumes, at the price of three guineas, will cost the purchaser less than the seventh part of a farthing per line. Yet there are lines among them, that have cost me the labor of hours, and none that have not cost me some labor.

W. C.

* See a similar instance, recorded in the Memoirs of Mrs. Hannah More, of the Bristol Milk-woman, Mrs. Yearsley.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Friday night, March 25, 1791.

My dear Coz.,—Johnson writes me word, that he has repeatedly called on Horace Walpole, and has never found him at home. He has also written to him and received no answer. I charge thee therefore on thy allegiance, that thou move not a finger more in this business. My back is up, and I cannot bear the thought of wooing him any farther, nor would do it, though he were as *pig* a gentleman (look you!) as Lucifer himself. I have Welsh blood in me, if the pedigree of the Donnes say true, and every drop of it says—"Let him alone!"

I should have dined at the Hall to-day, having engaged myself to do so. But an untoward occurrence, that happened last night or rather this morning, prevented me. It was a thundering rap at the door, just after the clock struck three. First, I thought the house was on fire. Then I thought the Hall was on fire. Then I thought it was a housebreaker's trick. Then I thought it was an express. In any case I thought, that if it should be repeated, it would awaken and terrify Mrs. Unwin, and kill her with spasms. The consequence of all these thoughts was the worst nervous fever I ever had in my life, although it was the shortest. The rap was given but once, though a multifarious one. Had I heard a second, I should have risen myself at all adventures. It was the only minute since you went, in which I have been glad that you were not here. Soon after I came down, I learned that a drunken party had passed through the village at that time, and they were, no doubt, the authors of this witty but troublesome invention.

Our thanks are due to you for the book you sent us. Mrs. Unwin has read to me several parts of it, which I have much admired. The observations are shrewd and pointed; and there is much wit in the similes and illustrations. Yet a remark struck me, which I could not help making *vivâ voce* on the occasion. If the book has any real value, and does in truth deserve the notice taken of it by those to whom it is addressed, its claim is founded neither on the expression, nor on the style, nor on the wit of it, but altogether on the truth that it contains. Now the same truths are delivered, to my knowledge, perpetually from the pulpit by ministers, whom the admirers of this writer

would disdain to hear. Yet the truth is not the less important for not being accompanied and recommended by brilliant thoughts and expressions; neither is God, from whom comes all truth, any more a respecter of wit than he is of persons. It will appear soon whether they applaud the book for the sake of its unanswerable arguments, or only tolerate the argument for the sake of the splendid manner in which it is enforced. I wish as heartily that it may do them good as if I were myself the author of it. But, alas! my wishes and hopes are much at variance. It will be the talk of the day, as another publication of the same kind has been; and then the noise of vanity-fair will drown the voice of the preacher.

I am glad to learn that the Chancellor does not forget me, though more for his sake than my own; for I see not how he can ever serve a man like me.

Adieu, my dearest coz.,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, March 29, 1791.

My dear Friend,—It affords me sincere pleasure that you enjoy serenity of mind after your great loss. It is well in all circumstances, even in the most afflictive, with those who have God for their comforter. You do me justice in giving entire credit to my expressions of friendship for you. No day passes in which I do not look back to the days that are fled: and, consequently, none in which I do not feel myself affectionately reminded of you and of her whom you have lost for a season. I cannot even see Olney spire from any of the fields in the neighborhood, much less can I enter the town, and still less the vicarage, without experiencing the force of those mementoes, and recollecting a multitude of passages to which you and yours were parties.

The past would appear a dream were the remembrance of it less affecting. It was in the most important respects so unlike my present moments that I am sometimes almost tempted to suppose it a dream. But the difference between dreams and realities long since elapsed seems to consist chiefly in this —that a dream, however painful or pleasant at the time, and perhaps for a few ensuing hours, passes like an arrow through the air, leaving no trace of its passage behind it: but our actual experiences make a lasting impression. We review those which interested us much when they occurred, with hardly less interest than in the first instance; and whether few years or many have intervened, our sensibility makes them still present, such a mere nullity is time to a creature to whom God gives a feeling heart and the faculty of recollection.

That you have not the first sight and sometimes, perhaps, have a late one of what I write, is owing merely to your distant situation. Some things I have written not worth your perusal; and a few, a very few, of such length that, engaged as I have been to Homer, it has not been possible that I should find opportunity to transcribe them. At the same time, Mrs. Unwin's pain in her side has almost forbidden her the use of the pen. She cannot use it long without increasing that pain; for which reason I am more unwilling than herself that she should ever meddle with it. But, whether what I write be a trifle, or whether it be serious, you would certainly, were you present, see them all. Others get a sight of them by being so, who would never otherwise see them; and I should hardly withhold them from you, whose claim upon me is of so much older a date than theirs. It is not indeed with readiness and good-will that I give them to anybody; for, if I live, I shall probably print them; and my friends, who are previously well acquainted with them, will have the less reason to value the book in which they shall appear. A trifle can have nothing to recommend it but its novelty. I have spoken of giving copies; but, in fact, I have given none. They who have them made them; for, till my whole work shall have fairly passed the press, it will not leave me a moment more than is necessarily due to my correspondents. Their number has of late increased upon me, by the addition of many of my maternal relatives, who, having found me out about a year since, have behaved to me in the most affectionate manner, and have been singularly serviceable to me in the article of my subscription. Several of them are coming from Norfolk to visit me in the course of the summer.

I enclose a copy of my last mortuary verses. The clerk for whom they were written is since dead: and whether his successor, the late sexton, will choose to be his own dirge-maker, or will employ me, is a piece of important news which has not yet reached me.

Our best remembrances attend yourself and Miss Catlett, and we rejoice in the kind Providence that has given you in her so amiable and comfortable a companion. Adieu, my dear friend. I am sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

Weston, April 2, 1791.

My dear Mrs. Frog,—A word or two before breakfast: which is all that I shall have time to send you! You have not, I hope, forgot to tell Mr. Frog how much I am

* Private correspondence.

obliged to him for his kind though unsuccessful attempt in my favor at Oxford. It seems not a little extraordinary that persons so nobly patronised themselves on the score of literature should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it.

Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
And tune his harp at Rhedicine's door,
The rich old vixen would exclaim (I fear)
"Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

I have read your husband's pamphlet through and through. You may think perhaps, and so may he, that a question so remote from all concern of mine could not interest me; but if you think so, you are both mistaken. He can write nothing that will not interest me: in the first place, for the writer's sake, and in the next place, because he writes better and reasons better than anybody; with more candor, and with more sufficiency, and, consequently, with more satisfaction to all his readers, save only his opponents. They, I think, by this time, wish that they had let him alone.

Tom is delighted past measure with his wooden nag, and gallops at a rate that would kill any horse that had a life to lose.

Adieu! W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, April 6, 1791.

My dear Johnny,—A thousand thanks for your splendid assemblage of Cambridge luminaries! If you are not contented with your collection, it can only be because you are unreasonable; for I, who may be supposed more covetous on this occasion than anybody, am highly satisfied, and even delighted with it. If indeed you should find it practicable to add still to the number, I have not the least objection. But this charge I give you:

Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι.

Stay not an hour beyond the time you have mentioned, even though you should be able to add a thousand names by doing so! For I cannot afford to purchase them at that cost. I long to see you, and so do we both, and will not suffer you to postpone your visit for any such consideration. No, my dear boy! In the affair of subscriptions, we are already illustrious enough, shall be so at least, when you shall have enlisted a college or two more; which, perhaps, you may be able to do in the course of the ensuing week. I feel myself much obliged to your university, and much disposed to admire the liberality of spirit which they have shown on this occasion. Certainly I had not deserved much favor at their hands, all things considered. But the cause of literature seems to have some weight with them, and to have superseded the resentment they might be supposed to entertain on the score of certain censures that you wot of. It is not so at Oxford. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, April 29, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I forget if I told you that Mr. Throckmorton had applied through the medium of —— to the university of Oxford. He did so, but without success. Their answer was, "that they subscribe to nothing."

Pope's subscriptions did not amount I think, to six hundred; and mine will not fall very short of five. Noble doings, at a time of day when Homer has no news to tell us, and when, all other comforts of life having risen in price, poetry has of course fallen. I call it a "comfort of life;" it is so to others, but to myself it is become even a necessary.

The holiday times are very unfavorable to the printer's progress. He and all his demons are making themselves merry and me sad, for I mourn at every hinderance. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, May 2, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Monday being a day in which Homer has now no demands upon me, I shall give part of the present Monday to you. But it this moment occurs to me that the proposition with which I begin will be obscure to you, unless followed by an explanation. You are to understand, therefore, that Monday being no post-day, I have consequently no proof-sheets to correct, the correction of which is nearly all that I have to do with Homer at present. I say nearly all, because I am likewise occasionally employed in reading over the whole of what is already printed, that I may make a table of errata to each of the poems. How much is already printed? say you: I answer—the whole Iliad, and almost seventeen books of the Odyssey.

About a fortnight since, perhaps three weeks, I had a visit from your nephew, Mr. Bagot, and his tutor, Mr. Hurlock, who came hither under conduct of your neice, Miss Barbara. So were the friends of Ulysses conducted to the palace of Antiphates the Læstrigonian by that monarch's daughter. But mine is no palace, neither am I a giant, neither did I devour one of the party. On the contrary, I gave them chocolate, and permitted them to depart in peace. I was much pleased both with the young man and his tutor. In the countenance of the former I saw much Bagotism, and not less in his manner. I will leave you to guess what I mean

by that expression. Physiognomy is a study of which I have almost as high an opinion as Lavater himself, the professor of it, and for this good reason, because it never yet deceived me. But perhaps I shall speak more truly if I say, that I am somewhat an adept in the art, although I have *never studied* it: for whether I will or not, I judge of every human creature by the countenance, and, as I say, have never yet seen reason to repent of my judgment. Sometimes I feel myself powerfully attracted, as I was by your nephew, and sometimes with equal vehemence repulsed, which attraction and repulsion have always been justified in the sequel.

I have lately read, and with more attention than I ever gave to them before, Milton's Latin poems. But these I must make the subject of some future letter, in which it will be ten to one that your friend Samuel Johnson gets another slap or two at the hands of your humble servant. Pray read them yourself, and with as much attention as I did; then read the Doctor's remarks if you have them, and then tell me what you think of both.* It will be pretty sport for you on such a day as this, which is the fourth that we have had of almost incessant rain. The weather, and a cold, the effect of it, have confined me ever since last Thursday. Mrs. Unwin however is well, and joins me in every good wish to yourself and family. I am, my good friend,

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. BUCHANAN.

Weston, May 11, 1791.

My dear Sir,—You have sent me a beautiful poem, wanting nothing but metre. I would to heaven that you could give it that requisite yourself; for he who could made the sketch cannot but be well qualified to finish. Bnt if you will not, I will; provided always, nevertheless, that God gives me ability, for it will require no common share to do justice to your conceptions.†

I am much yours, W. C.

Your little messenger vanished before I could catch him.

* Johnson's remark on Milton's Latin poems is as follows: "The Latin pieces are lusciously elegant; hut the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention or vigor of sentiment. They are not all of equal value; the elegies excel the odes; and some of the exercises on gunpowder treason might have been spared."

He, however, quotes with approbation the remark of Hampton, the translator of Polybius, that "Milton was the first Englishman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verses with classic elegance."—See *Johnson's Life of Milton*.

† We are indebted to Mr. Buchanan for having suggested to Cowper the outline of the poem called "The Four Ages," viz., infancy, youth, middle age, and old age. The writer was acquainted with this respectable clergyman in his declining years. He was considered to be a man of cultivated mind and taste.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 18, 1791.

My dearest Coz.,—Has another of my letters fallen short of its destination; or wherefore is it, that thou writest not? One letter in five weeks is a poor allowance for your friends at Weston. One, that I received two or three days since from Mrs. Frog, has not at all enlightened me on this head. But I wander in a wilderness of vain conjecture.

I have had a letter lately from New York, from a Doctor Cogswell of that place, to thank me for my fine verses, and to tell me, which pleased me particularly, that, after having read "The Task," my first volume fell into his hands, which he read also, and was equally pleased with. This is the only instance I can recollect of a reader doing justice to my first effusions: for I am sure, that in point of expression they do not fall a jot below my second, and that in point of subject they are for the most part superior. But enough, and too much of this, "The Task" he tells me has been reprinted in that city.

Adieu! my dearest coz.

We have blooming scenes under wintry skies, and with icy blasts to fan them.

Ever thine, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, May 23, 1791

My dearest Johnny,—Did I not know that you are never more in your element than when you are exerting yourself in my cause, I should congratulate you on the hope there seems to be that your labor will soon have an end.*

You will wonder, perhaps, my Johnny, that Mrs. Unwin, by my desire, enjoined you to secrecy concerning the translation of the Frogs and Mice.† Wonderful it may well seem to you, that I should wish to hide for a short time from a few what I am just going to publish to all. But I had more reasons than one for this mysterious management: that is to say, I had two. In the first place, I wished to surprise my readers agreeably: and secondly, I wished to allow none of my friends an opportunity to object to the measure, who might think it perhaps a measure more bountiful than prudent. But I have had my sufficient reward, though not a pecuniary one. It is a poem of much humor, and accordingly I found the translation of it very amusing. It struck me too, that I must either make it part of the present publication, or never publish it at all; it would have been so terribly out of its place in any other volume.

I long for the time that shall bring you

* The labor of transcribing Cowper's version.

† See his version of Homer.

once more to Weston, and all your *et ceteras* with you. Oh! what a month of May has this been! Let never poet, English poet at least, give himself to the praises of May again.

W. C.

We add the verses that he composed on this occasion.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Two nymphs,* both nearly of an age,
Of numerous charms possess'd,
A warm dispute once chanc'd to wage,
Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,
Had both alike been mild;
But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frown'd oft'ner than she smil'd.

And in her humor, when she frown'd,
Would raise her voice and roar;
And shake with fury to the ground,
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear;
Her frowns were never known to last,
And never prov'd severe.

To poets of renown in song,
The nymphs referr'd the cause,
Who, strange to tell! all judged it wrong
And gave misplac'd applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind, and soft,
The flippant and the scold;
And, though she chang'd her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges sure were e'er so mad,
Or so resolv'd to err;
In short, the charms her sister had,
They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the god, whom fondly they
Their great inspirer call,
Was heard one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all:

"Since thus ye have combin'd," he said,
"My fav'rite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid!
With June's undoubted right;

"The minx shall, for your folly's sake,
Still prove herself a shrew;
Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
And pinch your noses blue."

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 27, 1791.

My dearest Coz.,—I, who am neither dead, nor sick, nor idle, should have no excuse, were I as tardy in answering as you in writing. I live indeed where leisure abounds, and you where leisure is not; a difference that accounts sufficiently both for your silence and my loquacity.

* May and June.

When you told Mrs. —— that my Homer would come forth in May, you told her what you believed, and, therefore, no falsehood. But you told her at the same time what will not happen, and therefore not a truth. There is a medium between truth and falsehood; and I believe the word mistake expresses it exactly. I will therefore say that you were mistaken. If instead of May you had mentioned June, I flatter myself that you would have hit the mark. For in June there is every probability that we shall publish. You will say, "Hang the printer! for it is his fault!" But stay, my dear; hang him not just now! For to execute him and find another will cost us time, and so much, too, that I question if, in that case, we should publish sooner than in August. To say truth, I am not perfectly sure that there will be any necessity to hang him at all; though that is a matter which I desire to leave entirely at your discretion, alleging only, in the meantime, that the man does not appear to me during the last half year to have been at all in fault. His remittance of sheets in all that time has been punctual, save and except while the Easter holidays lasted, when I suppose he found it impossible to keep his devils to their business. I shall, however, receive the last sheet of the Odyssey to-morrow, and have already sent up the Preface, together with all the needful. You see, therefore, that the publication of this famous work cannot be delayed much longer.

As for politics, I reck not, having no room in my head for anything but the Slave bill. That is lost; and all the rest is a trifle. I have not seen Paine's book,* but refused to see it, when it was offered to me. No man shall convince me that I am improperly governed while I feel the contrary.

Adieu, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, June 1, 1791.

My dearest Johnny,—Now you may rest. Now I can give you joy of the period, of which I gave you hope in my last; the period of all your labors in my service.† But this I can foretell you, also, that, if you persevere in serving your friends at this rate, your life is likely to be a life of labor. Yet persevere! Your rest will be the sweeter hereafter! In the mean time I wish you, if at any time you should find occasion for him, just such a friend as you have proved to me!

W. C.

* The "Rights of Man," a book which created a great ferment in the country, by its revolutionary character and statements.

† As a transcriber.

PART THE THIRD.

Having now arrived at that period in the history of Cowper when he had brought to a close his great and laborious undertaking, his version of Homer, we suspend for a moment the progress of the correspondence, to afford room for a few observations.

We have seen in many of the preceding letters, with what ardor of application and liveliness of hope he devoted himself to this favorite project of enriching the literature of his country with an English Homer, that might justly be esteemed a faithful yet free translation; a genuine and graceful representative of the justly admired original.

After five years of intense labor, from which nothing could withhold him, except the pressure of that unhappy malady which retarded his exertions for several months, he published his complete version in two quarto volumes, on the first of July, 1791, having inscribed the Iliad to his young noble kinsman, Earl Cowper, and the Odyssey to the dowager Countess Spencer—a lady for whose virtues he had long entertained a most cordial and affectionate veneration.

He had exerted no common powers of genius and of industry in this great enterprise, yet, we lament to say, he failed in satisfying the expectations of the public. Hayley assigns a reason for this failure, which we give in his own words. "Homer," he observes, "is so exquisitely beautiful in his own language, and he has been so long an idol in every literary mind, that any copy of him, which the best of modern poets can execute, must probably resemble in its effect the portrait of a graceful woman, painted by an excellent artist for her lover: the lover indeed will acknowledge great merit in the work, and think himself much indebted to the skill of such an artist, but he will never admit, as in truth he never can feel, that the best of resemblances exhibits all the grace that he discerns in the beloved original."

This illustration is ingenious and amusing, but we doubt its justness; because the painter may produce a correct and even a flattering likeness of the lover's mistress, though it is true that the lover himself will think otherwise. But where is the translator that can do justice to the merits of Homer? Who can exhibit his majestic simplicity, his sententious force, the lofty grandeur of his conceptions, and the sweet charm of his imagery, embellished with all the graces of a language never surpassed either in harmony or richness? The two competitors, who are alone entitled to be contrasted with each other, are Pope and Cowper. We pass over Ogilby, Chapman, and others. It is Hector alone that is worthy to contend with Achilles. To the version of Pope must be allowed the praise of melody of numbers, richness of poetic diction, splendor of imagery and brilliancy of effect; but these merits are acquired at the expense of fidelity and justness of interpretation. The simplicity of the heroic ages is exchanged for the refinement of modern taste, and Homer sinks under the weight of ornaments not his own. Where Pope fails, Cowper succeeds; but, on the other hand, where Pope succeeds, Cowper seems to fail. Cowper is more faithful, but less rich and spirited. He is singularly exempt from the defects attributable to Pope. There is nothing extraneous, no meretricious ornament, no labored elegance, nothing added, nothing omitted. The integrity of the text is happily preserved. But though it is in the page of Cowper that we must seek for the true interpretation of Homer's meaning—though there are many passages distinguished by much grace and beauty—yet, on the whole, the lofty spirit, the bright glow of feeling, the "thoughts that breathe, the words that burn," are not sufficiently sustained. Each of these distinguished writers, to a certain extent, has failed, not from any want of genius, but because complete success is difficult, if not unattainable. Two causes may perhaps be assigned for this failure: first, no copy can equal the original, if the original be the production of a master artist. The poet who seeks to transfuse into his own page the meaning and spirit of an author, endowed with extraordinary powers, resembles the chemist in his laboratory, who, in endeavoring to condense the properties of different substances, and to extract their essence, has the misfortune to see a great portion of the volatile qualities evaporate in the process, and elude all the efforts of his philosophic art. Secondly, Homer still remains untranslated, because of all poets he is the most untranslateable. He seems to claim the lofty prerogative of standing alone, and of enjoying the solitary grandeur of his own unrivalled genius; allowing neither to rival nor to friend, to imitator nor to translator, the honors of participation: but exercising the exclusive right of interpreting

the majestic simplicity of his own conceptions, in all the fervor of his own poetic fancy, and in the sweet melody of his own graceful and flowing numbers. He who wishes to understand and to appreciate Homer, must seek him in the charm and beauty of his own inimitable language.

As Cowper's versions of the Iliad and Odyssey have formed so prominent a feature in his correspondence, for five successive years, we think it may be interesting to subjoin a few specimens from each translator, restricting our quotations to the Iliad, as being the most familiar to the reader.

We extract passages, where poetic skill was most likely to be exerted.

Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now with'ring on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those are past away.
Pope's Version, book vi. line 181.

For as the leaves, so springs the race of man.
Chill blasts shake down the leaves, and warm'd anew
By vernal airs the grove puts forth again:
Age after age, so man is born and dies.
Cowper's Version, book vi. line 164.

The interview between Hector and Andromache—

Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates;
(How my heart trembles while my tongue relates!)
The day when Thou, imperial Troy, must bend,
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end.
And yet no dire presage so wounds my mind,
My mother's death, the ruin of my kind,
Not Priam's hoary hairs defil'd with gore,
Not all my brothers gasping on the shore;
As thine, Andromache! thy griefs I dread.
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led!
In Argive looms our battles to design
And woes, of which so large a part was thine!
To bear the victor's hard commands, or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring.
There, while you groan beneath the load of life,
They cry, Behold the mighty Hector's wife!
Some haughty Greek, who lives thy tears to see,
Embitters all thy woes, by naming me.
The thoughts of glory past, and present shame,
A thousand griefs shall waken at the name!
May I lie cold before that dreadful day,
Press'd with a load of monumental clay!
Thy Hector, wrapt in everlasting sleep,
Shall neither see thee sigh, nor see thee weep.
Pope's Version, book vi. line 570.

For my prophetic soul foresees a day
When Ilium, Ilium's people, and, himself,
Her warlike king, shall perish. But no grief
For Ilium, for her people, for the king
My warlike sire: nor even for the queen;
Nor for the num'rous and the valiant band,
My brothers, destin'd all to bite the ground,
So moves me as my grief for thee alone,
Doom'd then to follow some imperious Greek,
A weeping captive to the distant shores
Of Argos; there to labor at the loom
For a task-mistress, and with many a sigh
But heav'd in vain, to bear the pond'rous urn
From Hypereia's, or Messeis' fount.
Fast flow thy tears the while, and as he eyes
That silent shower, some passing Greek shall say:
"This was the wife of Hector, who excell'd
All Troy in fight, when Ilium was besieg'd."
While thus he speaks thy tears shall flow afresh;
The guardian of thy freedom while he liv'd
Forever lost; but be my bones inhum'd,
A senseless store, or e'er thy parting cries
Shall pierce mine ear, and thou be dragg'd away.
Cowper's Version, book vi. line 501.

We add one more specimen, where the beauty of the imagery demands the exercise of poetic talent.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure sheds her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head,
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.*
Book viii. line 687.

As when around the clear bright moon, the stars
Shine in full splendor, and the winds are hush'd,
The groves, the mountain-tops, the headland
Stand all apparent, not a vapor streaks [heights,
The boundless blue, but ether open'd wide
All glitters, and the shepherd's heart is cheer'd.
Book viii. line 637.

We leave the reader to form his own decision as to the relative merits of the two translations. Pope evidently produces effect by expanding the sentiments and imagery of his author; Cowper invariably adheres to the original text. That full justice may be rendered to him, it is necessary not merely to compare him with Pope but with his great original.

After these remarks we once more return to the correspondence of Cowper.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, June 13, 1791.

My dear Sir,—I ought to have thanked you for your agreeable and entertaining letter much sooner, but I have many correspondents who will not be said nay; and have been obliged of late to give my last attentions to Homer. The very last indeed, for yesterday I despatched to town, after revising them carefully, the proof sheets of subscribers' names, among which I took special

* There is a similar passage in Mickle's "Lusiad," so full of beauty, that we cannot refrain from inserting it:—

The moon, full orb'd, forsakes her watery cave,
And lifts her lovely head above the wave;
The snowy splendors of her modest ray
Stream o'er the liquid wave, and glittering play:
The masts' tall shadows tremble in the deep;
The peaceful winds a holy silence keep;
The watchman's carol, echoed from the prows,
Alone, at times, disturbs the calm repose.

notice of yours, and am much obliged to you for it. We have contrived, or rather my bookseller and printer have contrived (for they have never waited a moment for me) to publish as critically at the wrong time, as if my whole interest and success had depended upon it. March, April, and May, said Johnson to me in a letter that I received from him in February, are the best months for publication. *Therefore* now it is determined that Homer shall come out on the first of July; that is to say, exactly at the moment when, except a few lawyers, not a creature will be left in town who will ever care one farthing about him. To which of these two friends of mine I am indebted for this management, I know not. It does not please, but I would be a philosopher as well as a poet, and therefore make no complaint, or grumble at all about it. You, I presume, have had dealings with them both—how did they manage for you? And, if as they have for me, how did you behave under it? Some who love me complain that I am too passive; and I should be glad of an opportunity to justify myself by your example. The fact is, should I thunder ever so loud, no efforts of that sort will avail me now; therefore, like a good economist of my bolts, I choose to reserve them for more profitable occasions.

I am glad to find that your amusements have been so similar to mine; for in this instance too I seemed in need of somebody to keep me in countenance, especially in my attention and attachment to animals. All the notice that we lords of the creation vouchsafe to bestow on the creatures is generally to abuse them; it is well, therefore, that here and there a man should be found a little womanish, or perhaps a little childish, in this matter, who will make some amends, by kissing and coaxing and laying them in one's bosom. You remember the little ewe lamb, mentioned by the prophet Nathan; the prophet perhaps invented the tale for the sake of its application to David's conscience; but it is more probable that God inspired him with it for that purpose. If he did, it amounts to a proof, that he does not overlook, but, on the contrary, much notices such little partialities and kindnesses to his *dumb* creatures, as we, because we articulate, are pleased to call them.

Your sisters are fitter to judge than I, whether assembly-rooms are the places, of all others, in which the ladies may be studied to most advantage. I am an old fellow, but I had once my dancing days as you have now, yet I could never find that I learned half so much of a woman's real character by dancing with her as by conversing with her at home, where I could observe her behavior at the table, at the fire-side, and in all the trying circumstances of domestic life. We are all good when we are pleased, but she is the good woman who wants not a fiddle to sweeten her. If I am wrong, the young ladies will set me right; in the meantime I will not tease you with graver arguments on the subject, especially as I have a hope, that years, and the study of the Scripture, and His Spirit whose word it is, will, in due time, bring you to my way of thinking. I am not one of those sages who require that young men should be as old as themselves before they have time to be so.

With my love to your fair sisters, I remain,
Dear Sir, most truly yours,
W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ,

The Lodge, June 15, 1791.

My dear Friend,—If it will afford you any comfort that you have a share in my affections, of that comfort you may avail yourself at all times. You have acquired it by means which, unless I should have become worthless myself to an uncommon degree, will always secure you from the loss of it. You are learning what all learn, though few at so early an age, that man is an ungrateful animal; and that benefits, too often, instead of securing a due return, operate rather as provocations to ill-treatment. This I take to be the *summum malum* of the human heart. Towards God we are all guilty of it more or less; but between man and man, we may thank God for it, there are some exceptions. He leaves this peccant principle to operate, in some degree against himself, in all, for our humiliation, I suppose; and because the pernicious effects of it in reality cannot injure him, he cannot suffer by them; but he knows that, unless he should retain its influence on the dealings of mankind with each other, the bonds of society would be dissolved, and all charitable intercourse at an end amongst us. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, "Do him an ill turn, and you make him your *friend* forever;" of others it may be said, "Do them a good one, and they will be forever your *enemies*." It is the grace of God only that makes the difference.

The absence of Homer (for we have now shaken hands and parted) is well supplied by three relations of mine, from Norfolk—my cousin Johnson, an aunt of his,* and his sister.† I love them all dearly, and am well content to resign to them the place in my attentions so lately occupied by the chiefs of Greece and Troy. His aunt and I have spent many a merry day together, when we were some forty years younger; and we make shift to be merry together still. His sister is a sweet young woman, graceful,

* Mrs. Bodham. † Mrs. Hewitt.

good-natured, and gentle, just what I had imagined her to be before I had seen her.*

Farewell, W. C.

TO DR. JAMES COGSWELL, NEW YORK.

Weston-Underwood, near Olney, Bucks, June 15, 1791.

Dear Sir,—Your letter and obliging present from so great a distance deserved a speedier acknowledgment, and should not have wanted one so long, had not circumstances so fallen out since I received them as to make it impossible for me to write sooner. It is indeed within this day or two that I have heard how, by the help of my bookseller, I may transmit an answer to you.

My title-page, as it well might, misled you. It speaks me of the Inner Temple; and so I am, but a member of that society only, not as an inhabitant. I live here almost at the distance of sixty miles from London, which I have not visited these eight-and-twenty years, and probably never shall again. Thus it fell out that Mr. Morewood had sailed again for America before your parcel reached me, nor should I (it is likely) have received it at all, had not a cousin of mine, who lives in the Temple, by good fortune received it first, and opened your letter; finding for whom it was intended, he transmitted to me both that and the parcel. Your testimony of approbation of what I have published, coming from another quarter of the globe, could not but be exceedingly flattering, as was your obliging notice that "The Task" had been reprinted in your city. Both volumes, I hope, have a tendency to discountenance vice, and promote the best interests of mankind. But how far they shall be effectual to these invaluable purposes depends altogether on His blessing, whose truths I have endeavored to inculcate. In the meantime I have sufficient proof, that readers may be pleased, may approve, and yet lay down the book unedified.

During the last five years I have been occupied with a work of a very different nature, a translation of the Iliad and Odyssey into blank verse, and the work is now ready for publication. I undertook it, partly because Pope's is too lax a version, which has lately occasioned the learned of this country to call aloud for a new one; and partly because I could fall on no better expedient to amuse a mind too much addicted to melancholy.

I send you, in return for the volumes with which you favored me, three on religious subjects, popular productions that have not been long published, and that may not therefore yet have reached your country: "The Christian Officer's Panoply, by a marine officer"—"The Importance of the Manners of the Great," and "An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World." The two last are said to be written by a lady, Miss Hannah More, and are universally read by people of that rank to which she addresses them. Your manners, I suppose, may be more pure than ours, yet it is not unlikely that even among you may be found some to whom her strictures are applicable. I return you my thanks, sir, for the volumes you sent me, two of which I have read with pleasure, Mr. Edwards's* book, and the Conquest of Canaan. The rest I have not had time to read, except Dr. Dwight's Sermon, which pleased me almost more than any that I have either seen or heard.

I shall account a correspondence with you an honor, and remain, dear sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston, June 24, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Considering the multiplicity of your engagements, and the importance, no doubt, of most of them, I am bound to set the higher value on your letters, and, instead of grumbling that they come seldom, to be thankful to you that they come at all. You are now going into the country, where, I presume, you will have less to do, and I am rid of Homer. Let us try, therefore, if, in the interval between the present hour and the next busy season (for I, too, if I live, shall probably be occupied again), we can continue to exchange letters more frequently than for some time past.

You do justice to me and Mrs. Unwin, when you assure yourself that to hear of your health will give us pleasure: I know not, in truth, whose health and well-being could give us more. The years that we have seen together will never be out of our remembrance; and, so long as we remember them, we must remember you with affection. In the pulpit, and out of the pulpit, you have labored in every possible way to serve us; and we must have a short memory indeed for the kindness of a friend, could we by any means become forgetful of yours. It would grieve me more than it does to hear you complain of the effects of time, were not I also myself the subject of them. While he is wearing out you and other dear friends of mine, he spares not me; for which I ought to account

* Mrs. Hewitt fully merited this description. She departed a few years before her brother, the late Dr. Johnson. Their remains lie in the same vault, at Yaxham, near Dereham, Norfolk.

* The celebrated American Edwards, well known for his two great works on "The Freedom of the Human Will," and on "Religious Affections." Dr. Dwight's Sermons are a body of sound and excellent theology.

† Private correspondence.

myself obliged to him, since I should otherwise be in danger of surviving all that I have ever loved—the most melancholy lot that can befall a mortal. God knows what will be my doom hereafter; but precious as life necessarily seems to a mind doubtful of its future happiness, I love not the world, I trust, so much as to wish a place in it when all my beloved shall have left it.

You speak of your late loss in a manner that affected me much; and when I read that part of your letter, I mourned with you and for you. But surely, I said to myself, no man had ever less reason to charge his conduct to a wife with anything blameworthy. Thoughts of that complexion, however, are no doubt extremely natural on the occasion of such a loss; and a man seems not to have valued sufficiently, when he possesses it no longer, what, while he possessed it, he valued more than life. I am mistaken, too, or you can recollect a time when you had fears, and such as became a Christian, of loving too much; and it is likely that you have even prayed to be preserved from doing so. I suggest this to you as a plea against those self-accusations, which I am satisfied that you do not deserve, and as an effectual answer to them all. You may do well too to consider, that had the deceased been the survivor she would have charged herself in the same manner, and, I am sure you will acknowledge, without any sufficient reason. The truth is, that you both loved at least as much as you ought, and, I dare say, had not a friend in the world who did not frequently observe it. To love just enough, and not a bit too much, is not for creatures who can do nothing well. If we fail in duties less arduous, how should we succeed in this, the most arduous of all?

I am glad to learn from yourself that you are about to quit a scene that probably keeps your tender recollections too much alive. Another place and other company may have their uses; and, while your church is undergoing repair, its minister may be repaired also.

As to Homer, I am sensible that, except as an amusement, he was never worth my meddling with: but, as an amusement, he was to me invaluable. As such he served me more than five years: and, in that respect, I know not where I shall find his equal. You oblige me by saying, that you will read him for my sake. I verily think that any person of a spiritual turn may read him to some advantage. He may suggest reflections that may not be unserviceable even in a sermon; for I know not where we can find more striking exemplars of the pride, the arrogance, and the insignificance of man; at the same time that, by ascribing all events to a divine interposition, he indicates constantly the belief of a providence; insists much on the duty of charity towards the poor and the stranger; on the respect that is due to superiors, and to our seniors in particular; and on the expedience and necessity of prayer and piety toward the gods, a piety mistaken, indeed, in its object, but exemplary for the punctuality of its performance. Thousands, who will not learn from scripture to ask a blessing either on their actions or on their food, may learn it, if they please, from Homer.

My Norfolk cousins are now with us. We are both as well as usual; and with our affectionate remembrances to Miss Catlett,

I remain sincerely yours, W. C.

We are indebted to the kindness of a friend for the following letter:—

TO MRS. BODHAM, SOUTH GREEN, MATTISHALL, NORFOLK.

Weston-Underwood, July 7, 1791.

My dearest Cousin,—Most true it is, however strange, that on the 25th of last month I wrote you a long letter, and verily thought I sent it; but, opening my desk the day before yesterday, there I found it. Such a memory have I—a good one never, but at present worse than usual, my head being filled with the cares of publication,* and the bargain that I am making with my bookseller.

I am sorry that through this forgetfulness of mine you were disappointed, otherwise should not at all regret that my letter never reached you; for it consisted principally of such reasons as I could muster to induce you to consent to a favorite measure to which you have consented without them. Your kindness and self-denying disinterestedness on this occasion have endeared you to us all, if possible, still the more, and are truly worthy of the Rose† that used to sit smiling on my knee, I will not say how many years ago.

Make no apologies, my dear, that thou dost not write more frequently:—write when thou canst, and I shall be satisfied. I am sensible, as I believe I have already told you, that there is an awkwardness in writing to those with whom we have hardly ever conversed; in consideration of which, I feel myself not at all inclined either to wonder at or to blame your silence. At the same time, be it known to you, that you must not take encouragement from this my great moderation, lest, disuse increasing the labor, you should at last write not at all.

That I should visit Norfolk at present is not possible. I have heretofore pleaded my engagement to Homer as the reason, and a reason it was, while it subsisted, that was ab-

* The publication of the translation of Homer.
† The name he gave to Mrs. Bodham when a child.

solutely insurmountable. But there are still other impediments, which it would neither be pleasant to me to relate, nor to you to know, and which could not well be comprised in a letter. Let it suffice for me to say that, could they be imparted, you would admit the force of them. It shall be our mutual consolation, that, if we cannot meet at Mattishall, at least we may meet at Weston, and that we shall meet here with double satisfaction, being now so numerous.

Your sister is well; Kitty,* I think, better than when she came; and Johnny† ails nothing, except that if he eat a little more supper than usual, he is apt to be riotous in his sleep. We have an excellent physician at Northampton, whom our dear Catharine wishes to consult, and I have recommended it to Johnny to consult him at the same time. His nocturnal ailment is, I dare say, within the reach of medical advice; and, because it may happen some time or other to be very hurtful to him, I heartily wish him cured of it. Light suppers and early rising perhaps might alone be effectual—but the latter is a difficulty that threatens not to be easily surmounted.

We are all of one mind respecting you; therefore I send the love of all, though I shall see none of the party till breakfast calls us together. Great preparation is making in the empty house. The spiders have no rest, and hardly a web is to be seen where lately there were thousands.

I am, my dearest cousin, with the best respects to Mr. Bodham, most affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.‡

Weston, July 22, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I did not foresee, when I challenged you to a brisker correspondence, that a new engagement of all my leisure was at hand: a new and yet an old one. An interleaved copy of my Homer arrived soon after from Johnson, in which he recommended it to me to make any alterations that might yet be expedient, with a view to another impression. The alterations that I make are indeed but few, and they are also short; not more, perhaps, than half a line in two thousand. But the lines are, I suppose, nearly forty thousand in all, and to revise them critically must consequently be a work of labor. I suspend it, however, for your sake, till the present sheet be filled, and that I may not seem to shrink from my own offer.

Mr. Bean has told me that he saw you at Bedford, and gave us your reasons for not coming our way. It is well, so far as your own comfortable lodging and our gratification were concerned, that you did not; for our house is brimful, as it has been all the summer, with my relations from Norfolk. We should all have been mortified, both you and we, had you been obliged, as you must have been, to seek a residence elsewhere.

I am sorry that Mr. Venn's* labors below are so near to a conclusion. I have seen few men whom I could have loved more, had opportunity been given me to know him better. So, at least, I have thought as often as I have seen him. But when I saw him last, which is some years since, he appeared then so much broken that I could not have imagined that he would last so long. Were I capable of envying, in the strict sense of the word, a good man, I should envy him, and Mr. Berridge,† and yourself, who have spent, and while they last, will continue to spend, your lives in the service of the only Master worth serving; laboring always for the souls of men, and not to tickle their ears, as I do. But this I can say—God knows how much rather I would be the obscure tenant of a lath-and-plaster cottage, with a lively sense of my interest in a Redeemer, than the most admired object of public notice without it. Alas! what is a whole poem, even one of Homer's, compared with a single aspiration that finds its way immediately to God, though clothed in ordinary language, or perhaps not articulated at all! These are my sentiments as much as ever they were, though my days are all running to waste among Grecks and Trojans. The night cometh when no man can work; and, if I am ordained to work to better purpose, that desirable period cannot be very distant. My day is beginning to shut in, as every man's must who is on the verge of sixty.

All the leisure that I have had of late for thinking, has been given to the riots at Birmingham. What a horrid zeal for the church, and what a horrid loyalty to government, have manifested themselves there! How little do they dream that they could not have dishonored their idol, the Establishment, more, and that the great Bishop of souls himself with abhorrence rejects their service! But I have not time to enlarge; breakfast calls me; and all my post-breakfast time must be given to poetry. Adieu!

Most truly yours, W. C.

* Miss Johnson, afterwards Mrs. Hewitt.
† Mr. Johnson.
‡ Private correspondence.

* The Rev. Henry Venn, successively vicar of Huddersfield, Yorkshire, and rector of Yelling, Huntingdonshire, eminent for his piety and usefulness. He was the author of "The Complete Duty of Man," the design of which was to correct the deficiencies so justly imputable to "The Whole Duty of Man," by laying the foundation of moral duties in the principles inculcated by the gospel. There is an interesting and valuable memoir of this excellent man, edited by the Rev. Henry Venn, B.D., his grandson, which we recommend to the notice of the reader.

† Mr. Berridge was vicar of Everton, Beds; a most zealous and pious minister.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, August 2, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I was much obliged, and still feel myself much obliged, to Lady Bagot for the visit with which she favored me. Had it been possible that I could have seen Lord Bagot too, I should have been completely happy. For, as it happened, I was that morning in better spirits than usual, and, though I arrived late, and after a long walk, and extremely hot, which is a circumstance very apt to disconcert me, yet I was not disconcerted half so much as I generally am at the sight of a stranger, especially of a stranger lady, and more especially at the sight of a stranger lady of quality. When the servant told me that Lady Bagot was in the parlor, I felt my spirits sink ten degrees; but, the moment I saw her, at least, when I had been a minute in her company, I felt them rise again, and they soon rose even above their former pitch. I know two ladies of fashion now whose manners have this effect upon me, the lady in question and the Lady Spencer. I am a shy animal, and want much kindness to make me easy. Such I shall be to my dying day.

Here sit *I*, calling myself *shy*, yet have just published by the *bye*, two great volumes of poetry.

This reminds me of Ranger's observation in the "Suspicious Husband," who says to somebody, I forget whom, "*There is a degree of assurance in you modest men that we impudent fellows can never arrive at.*"—Assurance, indeed! Have you seen 'em? What do you think they are? Nothing less, I can tell you, than a translation of Homer, of the sublimest poet in the world. That's all. Can I ever have the impudence to call myself shy again?

You live, I think, in the neighborhood of Birmingham. What must you not have felt on the late alarming occasion! You, I suppose, could see the fires from your windows. We, who only heard the news of them, have trembled. Never sure was religious zeal more terribly manifested or more to the prejudice of its own cause.*

Adieu, my dear friend. I am, with Mrs. Unwin's best compliments,

Ever yours,

W. C.

* The riots at Birmingham originated in the imprudent zeal of Dr. Priestley, and his adherents, the Unitarian dissenters, who assembled together at a public dinner, to commemorate the events of the French revolution. Toasts were given of an inflammatory tendency, and handbills were previously circulated of a similar character. The town of Birmingham being distinguished for its loyalty, became deeply excited by these acts. The mob collected in great multitudes, and proceeded to the house of Dr. Priestley, which they destroyed with fire. All his valuable philosophical apparatus and manuscripts perished on this occasion. We concur with Cowper in lamenting such outrages.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston, Aug. 4, 1791.

My dear Madam,—Your last letter, which gave us so unfavorable an account of your health, and which did not speak much more comfortably of Mr. King's, affected us with much concern. Of Dr. Raitt we may say, in the words of Milton,

> "His long experience did attain
> To something like prophetic strain;"

for as he foretold to you, so he foretold to Mrs. Unwin, that, though her disorders might not much threaten life, they would yet cleave to her to the last; and she and perfect health must ever be strangers to each other. Such was his prediction, and it has been hitherto accomplished. Either headache or pain in the side has been her constant companion ever since we had the pleasure of seeing you. As for myself, I cannot properly say that I *enjoy* a good state of health, though in general I have it, because I have it accompanied with frequent fits of dejection, to which less health and better spirits would, perhaps, be infinitely preferable. But it pleased God that I should be born in a country where melancholy is the national characteristic. To say the truth, I have often wished myself a Frenchman.

N. B. I write this in very good spirits.

You gave us so little hope in your last, that we should have your company this summer at Weston, that to repeat our invitation seems almost like teasing you. I will only say, therefore, that, my Norfolk friends having left us, of whose expected arrival here I believe I told you in a former letter, we should be happy could you succeed them. We now, indeed, expect Lady Hesketh, but not immediately: she seldom sees Weston till all its summer beauties are fled, and red, brown, and yellow, have supplanted the universal verdure.

My Homer is gone forth, and I can devoutly say, "Joy go with it!" What place it holds in the estimation of the generality I cannot tell, having heard no more about it since its publication than if no such work existed. I must except, however, an anonymous eulogium from some man of letters, which I received about a week ago. It was kind in a perfect stranger, as he avows himself to be, to relieve me, at so early a day, from much of the anxiety that I could not but feel on such an occasion. I should be glad to know who he is, only that I might thank him.

Mrs. Unwin, who is at this moment come down to breakfast, joins me in affectionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King; and I am, my dear madam,

Most sincerely yours, W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, August 9, 1791.

My dear Sir,—I never make a correspondent wait for an answer through idleness, or want of proper respect for him; but if I am silent it is because I am busy, or not well, or because I stay till something occur that may make my letter at least a little better than mere blank paper. I therefore write speedily in reply to yours, being at present neither much occupied, nor at all indisposed, nor forbidden by a dearth of materials.

I wish always, when I have a new piece in hand, to be as secret as you, and there was a time when I could be so. Then I lived the life of a solitary, was not visited by a single neighbor, because I had none with whom I could associate; nor ever had an inmate. This was when I dwelt at Olney; but since I have removed to Weston the case is different. Here I am visited by all around me, and study in a room exposed to all manner of inroads. It is on the ground floor, the room in which we dine, and in which I am sure to be found by all who seek me. They find me generally at my desk, and with my work, whatever it be, before me, unless perhaps I have conjured it into its hiding-place before they have had time to enter. This, however, is not always the case; and, consequently, sooner or later, I cannot fail to be detected. Possibly you, who I suppose have a snug study, would find it impracticable to attend to anything closely in an apartment exposed as mine, but use has made it familiar to me, and so familiar, that neither servants going and coming disconcert me; nor even if a lady, with an oblique glance of her eye, catches two or three lines of my MSS., do I feel myself inclined to blush, though naturally the shyest of mankind.

You did well, I believe, to cashier the subject of which you gave me a recital. It certainly wants those *agrémens* which are necessary to the success of any subject in verse. It is a curious story, and so far as the poor young lady was concerned a very affecting one; but there is a coarseness in the character of the hero that would have spoiled all. In fact, I find it myself a much easier matter to write, than to get a convenient theme to write on.

I am obliged to you for comparing me as you go both with Pope and with Homer. It is impossible in any other way of management to know whether the translation be well executed or not, and if well, in what degree. It was in the course of such a process that I first became dissatisfied with Pope. More than thirty years since, and when I was a young Templar, I accompanied him with his original, line by line, through both poems. A fellow student of mine, a person of fine classical taste, joined himself with me in the labor. We were neither of us, as you may imagine, very diligent in our proper business.

I shall be glad if my reviewers, whosoever they may be, will be at the pains to read me as you do. I want no praise that I am not entitled to, but of that to which I am entitled. I should be loath to lose a tittle, having worked hard to earn it.

I would heartily second the Bishop of Salisbury* in recommending to you a close pursuit of your Hebrew studies, were it not that I wish you to publish what I may understand. Do both, and I shall be satisfied.

Your remarks, if I may but receive them soon enough to serve me in case of a new edition, will be extremely welcome.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 9, 1791.

My dearest Johnny,—The little that I have heard about Homer myself has been equally or more flattering than Dr. ——'s intelligence, so that I have good reason to hope that I have not studied the old Grecian, and how to dress him, so long and so intensely, to no purpose. At present I am idle, both on account of my eyes and because I know not to what to attach myself in particular. Many different plans and projects are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence, I hope, will direct me in my choice, for other guide I have none, nor wish for another.

God bless you, my dearest Johnny,

W. C.

The active mind of Cowper, and the necessity of mental exertion, in order to arrest the terrible incursions of his depressing malady, soon led him to contract a new literary engagement. A splendid edition of Milton was at that time contemplated, intended to rival the celebrated Shakspeare of Boydell; and to combine all the adventitious aid that editorial talent, the professional skill of a most distinguished artist, and the utmost embellishment of type could command, to ensure success. Johnson, the bookseller, invited the co-operation of Cowper, in the responsible office of Editor. For such an undertaking he was unquestionably qualified, by his refined critical taste and discernment, and by his profound veneration for this first of modern epic poets. Cowper readily entered into this project, and by his admirable translations of the Latin and Italian poems of Milton, justly added to the fame which he had already acquired. But to those who know how to appreciate his poetic powers, and his noble ardor in proclaiming the most important

* Dr. Douglas.

truths, it must ever be a source of unfeigned regret that the hours given to translation, and especially to Homer, were not dedicated to the composition of some original work. Who would not have hailed with delight another poem, rivalling all the beauties and moral excellences of "The Task," and endearing to the mind, with still higher claims, the sweet poet of nature, and the graceful yet sublime teacher of heavenly truth and wisdom?

The grief is this—that, sunk in Homer's mine,
I lose my precious years, now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross when balanc'd in the Christian scale.*

It was this literary engagement that first laid the foundation of that intercourse, which commenced at this time between Cowper and Hayley; an intercourse which seems to have ripened into subsequent habits of friendship. As their names have been so much associated together, and Hayley eventually became the poet's biographer, we shall record the circumstances of the origin of their intimacy in Hayley's own words.

"As it is to Milton that I am in a great measure indebted for what I must ever regard as a signal blessing, the friendship of Cowper, the reader will pardon me for dwelling a little on the circumstances that produced it; circumstances which often lead me to repeat those sweet verses of my friend, on the casual origin of our most valuable attachments:

'Mysterious are his ways, whose power,
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is th' allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions.'

These charming verses strike with peculiar force on my heart, when I recollect, that it was an idle endeavor to make us enemies which gave rise to our intimacy, and that I was providentially conducted to Weston at a season when my presence there afforded peculiar comfort to my affectionate friend under the pressure of a domestic affliction, which threatened to overwhelm his very tender spirits.*

"The entreaty of many persons, whom I wished to oblige, had engaged me to write a Life of Milton, before I had the slightest suspicion that my work could interfere with the projects of any man; but I was soon surprised and concerned in hearing that I was represented in a newspaper as an antagonist of Cowper.

"I immediately wrote to him on the subject, and our correspondence soon endeared us to each other in no common degree."

We gave credit to Hayley for the kind and amiable spirit which he manifested on this delicate occasion; and for the address with which he converted an apparent collision of interests into a magnanimous triumph of literary and courteous feeling.

The succeeding letters will be found to contain frequent allusions both to his past and newly contracted engagement.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Sept. 14, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Whoever reviews me will in fact have a laborious task of it, in the performance of which he ought to move leisurely, and to exercise much critical discernment. In the meantime, my courage is kept up by the arrival of such testimonies in my favor as give me the greatest pleasure; coming from quarters the most respectable. I have reason, therefore, to hope that our periodical judges will not be very averse to me, and that perhaps they may even favor me. If one man of taste and letters is pleased, another man so qualified can hardly be displeased; and if critics of a different description grumble, they will not however materially hurt me.

You, who know how necessary it is to me to be employed, will be glad to hear that I have been called to a new literary engagement, and that I have not refused it. A Milton, that is to rival, and, if possible, to exceed in splendor, Boydell's Shakspeare, is in contemplation, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes; to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. I shall have years allowed me to do it in.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Sept. 21, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Of all the testimonies in favor of my Homer that I have received, none has given me so sincere a pleasure as that of Lord Bagot. It is an unmixed pleasure, and without a drawback; because I know him to be perfectly, and in all respects, whether erudition or a fine taste be in question, so well qualified to judge me, that I can neither expect nor wish a sentence more valuable than his—

. . . . . ἶσόν' ἀύτμὴ
Ἐν στήθεσσι μέ.ει, καὶ μοι φίλα γοῦνα' ὀρώρει.

* See verses addressed to John Johnson, Esq.

† An alarming attack with which Mrs. Unwin was visited.

I hope by this time you have received your volumes, and are prepared to second the applauses of your brother—else, woe be to you! I wrote to Johnson immediately on the receipt of your last, giving him a strict injunction to despatch them to you without delay. He had sold some time since a hundred of the unsubscribed-for copies.

I have not a history in the world except Baker's Chronicle, and that I borrowed three years ago from Mr. Throckmorton. Now the case is this: I am translating Milton's third Elegy—his Elegy on the death of the Bishop of Winchester.* He begins it with saying, that, while he was sitting alone, dejected, and musing on many melancholy themes, first, the idea of the Plague presented itself to his mind, and of the havoc made by it among the great. Then he proceeds thus:

Tum memini clarique ducis, fratrisque verendi
Intempestivis ossa cremata rogis:
Et memini Heroum quos vidit ad æthera raptos;
Flevit et amissos Belgia tota duces.

I cannot learn from my only oracle, Baker, who this famous leader and his reverend brother were. Nor does he at all ascertain for me the event alluded to in the second of these couplets. I am not yet possessed of Warton, who probably explains it, nor can be for a month to come. Consult him for me if you have him, or, if you have him not, consult some other. Or you may find the intelligence perhaps in your own budget; no matter how you come by it, only send it to me if you can, and as soon as you can, for I hate to leave unsolved difficulties behind me.† In the first year of Charles the First, Milton was seventeen years of age, and then wrote this elegy. The period therefore to which I would refer you, is the two or three last years of James the First.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. KING.‡

Weston, Sept. 23, 1791.

Dear Sir,—We are truly concerned at your account of Mrs. King's severe indisposition: and, though you had no better news to tell us, are much obliged to you for writing to inform us of it, and to Mrs. King for desiring you to do it. We take a lively interest in what concerns her. I should never have ascribed her silence to neglect, had she neither written to me herself nor commissioned you to write for her. I had, indeed, for some time expected a letter from her by every post, but accounted for my continual disappointment by supposing her at Edgeware, to which place she intended a visit, as she told me long since, and hoped that she would write immediately on her return.

Her sufferings will be felt here till we learn that they are removed; for which reason we shall be much obliged by the earliest notice of her recovery, which we most sincerely wish, if it please God, and which will not fail to be a constant subject of prayer at Weston.

I beg you, sir, to present Mrs. Unwin's and my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. King, in which you are equally a partaker, and to believe me, with true esteem and much sincerity,

Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston, Oct. 21, 1791.

My dear Friend,—You could not have sent me more agreeable news than that of your better health, and I am greatly obliged to you for making me the first of your correspondents to whom you have given that welcome intelligence. This is a favor which I should have acknowledged much sooner, had not a disorder in my eyes, to which I have always been extremely subject, required that I should make as little use of my pen as possible. I felt much for you, when I read that part of your letter in which you mention your visitors, and the fatigue which, indisposed as you have been, they could not fail to occasion you. Agreeable as you would have found them at another time, and happy as you would have been in their company, you could not but feel the addition they necessarily made to your domestic attentions as a considerable inconvenience. But I have always said, and shall never say otherwise, that if patience under adversity, and submission to the afflicting hand of God, be true fortitude—which no reasonable person can deny—then your sex have ten times more true fortitude to boast than ours; and I have not the least doubt that you carried yourself with infinitely more equanimity on that occasion than I should have done, or any he of my acquaintance. Why is it, since the first offender on earth was a woman, that the women are nevertheless, in all the most important points, superior to the men? That they are so I will not allow to be disputed, having observed it ever since I was capable of making the observation. I believe, on recollection, that, when I had the happiness to see you here, we agitated this question a little; but I

* Mœstus eram, et tacitus nullo comitante sedebam,
Hærebantque animo tristia plura meo: &c. &c.

† Warton informs us that the distinguished brothers alluded to in Milton's elegy are the Duke of Brunswick and Count Mansfelt, who fell in the war of the Palatinate, that fruitful scene of warlike operations. The two latter are the Earls of Oxford and Southampton, who died at the siege of Breda, in the year 1625.

‡ Private correspondence.

* Private correspondence.

do not remember that we arrived at any decision of it. The Scripture calls you the *weaker vessels;* and perhaps the best solution of the difficulty, therefore, may be found in those other words of Scripture—*My strength is perfected in weakness.* Unless you can furnish me with a better key than this, I shall be much inclined to believe that I have found the true one.

I am deep in a new literary engagement, being retained by my bookseller as editor of an intended most magnificent publication of Milton's Poetical Works. This will occupy me as much as Homer did for a year or two to come; and when I have finished it, I shall have run through all the degrees of my profession, as author, translator, and editor. I know not that a fourth could be found: but if a fourth can be found, I dare say I shall find it.

I remain, my dear madam, your affectionate friend and humble servant, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Oct. 25, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Your unexpected and transient visit, like everything else that is past, has now the appearance of a dream, but it was a pleasant one, and I heartily wish that such dreams could recur more frequently. Your brother Chester repeated his visit yesterday, and I never saw him in better spirits. At such times he has, now and then, the very look that he had when he was a boy, and when I see it I seem to be a boy myself, and entirely forget for a short moment the years that have intervened since I was one. The look that I mean is one that you, I dare say, have observed.—Then we are at Westminster again. He left with me that poem of your brother Lord Bagot's which was mentioned when you were here. It was a treat to me, and I read it to my cousin Lady Hesketh and to Mrs. Unwin, to whom it was a treat also. It has great sweetness of numbers and much elegance of expression, and is just such a poem as I should be happy to have composed myself about a year ago, when I was loudly called upon by a certain nobleman* to celebrate the beauties of his villa. But I had two insurmountable difficulties to contend with. One was that I had never seen his villa, and the other, that I had no eyes at that time for anything but Homer. Should I at any time hereafter undertake the task, I shall now at least know how to go about it, which, till I had seen Lord Bagot's poem, I verily did not. I was particularly charmed with the parody of those beautiful lines of Milton:

* Lord Bagot.

"The song was partial, but the harmony——
(What could it less, when spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience."

There's a parenthesis for you! The parenthesis it seems is out of fashion, and perhaps the moderns are in the right to proscribe what they cannot attain to. I will answer for it that had we the art at this day of insinuating a sentiment in this graceful manner, no reader of taste would quarrel with the practice. Lord Bagot showed his by selecting the passage for his imitation.

I would beat Warton, if he were living, for supposing that Milton ever repented of his compliment to the memory of Bishop Andrews. I neither do, nor can, nor will believe it. Milton's mind could not be narrowed by anything, and, though he quarrelled with episcopacy in the church of England idea of it, I am persuaded that a good bishop, as well as any other good man, of whatsoever rank or order, had always a share of his veneration.*

Yours, my dear friend,
Very affectionately, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 31, 1791.

My dear Johnny,—Your kind and affectionate letter well deserves my thanks, and should have had them long ago, had I not been obliged lately to give my attention to a mountain of unanswered letters, which I have just now reduced to a mole-hill: yours lay at the bottom, and I have at last worked my way down to it.

It gives me great pleasure that you have found a house to your minds. May you all three be happier in it than the happiest that ever occupied it before you! But my chief delight of all is to learn that you and Kitty are so completely cured of your long and threatening maladies. I always thought highly of Dr. Kerr, but his extraordinary success in your two instances has even inspired me with an affection for him.

My eyes are much better than when I wrote last, though seldom perfectly well many days together. At this season of the year I catch perpetual colds, and shall continue to do so till I have got the better of that tenderness of habit with which the summer never fails to affect me.

I am glad that you have heard well of my work in your country. Sufficient proofs have reached me from various quarters that I have not ploughed the field of Troy in vain.

Were you here, I would gratify you with

* How much more charitable is Cowper's comment, than the injurious surmise of Warton!

an enumeration of particulars, but since you are not, it must content you to be told that I have every reason to be satisfied.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, in her letter to Cousin Balls, made mention of my new engagement. I have just entered on it, and therefore can at present say little about it. It is a very creditable one in itself, and may I but acquit myself of it with sufficiency it will do me honor. The commentator's part however is a new one to me, and one that I little thought to appear in. Remember your promise that I shall see you in the spring.

The Hall has been full of company ever since you went, and at present my Catharina* is there, singing and playing like an angel.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 14, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I have waited and wished for your opinion with the feelings that belong to the value that I have for it, and am very happy to find it so favorable. In my table-drawer I treasure up a bundle of suffrages sent me by those of whose approbation I was most ambitious, and shall presently insert yours among them.

I know not why we should quarrel with compound epithets; it is certain, at least, they are as agreeable to the genius of our language as to that of the Greek, which is sufficiently proved by their being admitted into our common and colloquial dialect. Black-eyed, nut-brown, crook-shanked, hump-backed, are all compound epithets, and, together with a thousand other such, are used continually, even by those who profess a dislike to such combinations in poetry. Why, then, do they treat with so much familiarity a thing that they say disgusts them? I doubt if they could give this question a reasonable answer, unless they should answer it by confessing themselves unreasonable.

I have made a considerable progress in the translation of Milton's Latin poems. I give them, as opportunity offers, all the variety of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhyme, some in stanzas, some in seven and some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse. They will, altogether, I hope, make an agreeable miscellany for the English reader. They are certainly good in themselves, and cannot fail to please but by the fault of their translator.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston, Nov. 16, 1791.

My dear Friend,—I am weary of making you wait for an answer, and therefore resolve to send you one, though without the lines you ask for. Such as they are they have been long ready; and could I have found a conveyance for them, should have been with you weeks ago. Mr. Bean's last journey to town might have afforded me an opportunity to send them, but he gave me not sufficient notice. They must, therefore, be still delayed till either he shall go to London again or somebody else shall offer. I thank you for yours, which are as much better than mine as gold is better than feathers.

It seemed necessary that I should account for my apparent tardiness to comply with the obliging request of a lady, and of a lady who employed you as her intermedium. None was wanted, as you well assured her. But had there been occasion for one, she could not possibly have found a better.

I was much pleased with your account of your visit to Cowslip Green,* both for the sake of what you saw there, and because I am sure you must have been as happy in such company as any situation in this world can make you. Miss More has been always employed, since I first heard of her doings, as becomes a Christian. So she was while endeavoring to reform the unreformable great; and so she is, while framing means and opportunities to instruct the more tractable little. Horace's *Virginibus, puerisque*, may be her motto, but in a sense much nobler than he has annexed to it. I cannot, however, be entirely reconciled to the thought of her being henceforth silent, though even for the sake of her present labors.† A pen useful as hers ought not, perhaps, to be laid aside; neither, perhaps, will she altogether renounce it, but, when she has established her schools, and habituated them to the discipline she intends, will find it desirable to resume it. I rejoice that she has a sister like herself, capable of bidding defiance to fatigue and hardship, to dirty roads and wet raiment, in so excellent a cause.‡

I beg that when you write next to either of those ladies, you will present my best compliments to Miss Martha, and tell her that I can never feel myself flattered more than I was by her application. God knows how unworthy I judge myself, at the same time, to be admitted into a collection§ of which you are a member. Were there not a crowned head or two to keep me in countenance, I should even blush to think of it.

I would that I could see some of the mountains which you have seen; especially, because

* The present Dowager Lady Throckmorton.
† Private correspondence.

* The residence of the late Mrs. Hannah More, near Bristol.

† The establishment of her schools, comprising the children of several parishes, then in a most neglected and uncivilized state. See the interesting account of the origin and progress of these schools in the Memoir of Mrs. More.

‡ Mrs. Martha More. § Of autographs.

Dr. Johnson has pronounced that no man is qualified to be a poet who has never seen a mountain. But mountains I shall never see, unless perhaps in a dream, or unless there are such in heaven. Nor those, unless I receive twice as much mercy as ever yet was shown to any man.

I am now deep in Milton, translating his Latin poems for a pompous edition, of which you have undoubtedly heard. This amuses me for the present, and will for a year or two. So long, I presume, I shall be occupied in the several functions that belong to my present engagement.

Mrs. Unwin and I are about as well as usual; always mindful of you, and always affectionately so. Our united love attends yourself and Miss Catlett.

Believe me, most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 5, 1791.

My dear Friend,—Your last brought me two cordials; for what can better deserve that name than the cordial approbation of two such readers as your brother, the bishop, and your good friend and neighbor, the clergyman. The former I have ever esteemed and honored with the justest cause, and am as ready to honor and esteem the latter as you can wish me to be, and as his wishes and talents deserve. Do I hate a parson? Heaven forbid! I love you all when you are good for anything, and, as to the rest, I would mend them if I could, and that is the worst of my intentions towards them.

I heard above a month since that this first edition of my work was at that time nearly sold. It will not, therefore, I presume, be long before I must go to press again. This I mention merely from an earnest desire to avail myself of all other strictures that either your good neighbor, Lord Bagot, the bishop, or yourself,

πάντων ἐκπαγλύτατ' ἀνέρων,

may happen to have made, and will be so good as to favor me with. Those of the good Evander contained in your last have served me well, and I have already, in three different places referred to, accommodated the text to them. And this I have done in one instance even a little against the bias of my own opinion.

. . . . . ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἑλωμαι
Ἐλθὼν σὺν πλεόνεσσι.

The sense I had given of these words is the sense in which an old scholiast has understood them, as appears in Clarke's note *in loco*. Clarke indeed prefers the other, but it does not appear plain to me that he does it with good reason against the judgment of a very ancient commentator and a Grecian. And I am the rather inclined to this persuasion, because Achilles himself seems to have apprehended that Agamemnon would not content himself with Briseis only, when he says,

But I have OTHER precious things on board,
Of THESE take NONE away without my leave, &c.

It is certain that the words are ambiguous, and that the sense of them depends altogether on the punctuation. But I am always under the correction of so able a critic as your neighbor, and have altered, as I say, my version accordingly.

As to Milton, the die is cast. I am engaged, have bargained with Johnson, and cannot recede. I should otherwise have been glad to do as you advise, to make the translation of his Latin and Italian part of another volume; for, with such an addition, I have nearly as much verse in my budget as would be required for the purpose. This squabble, in the meantime, between Fuseli and Boydell* does not interest me at all; let it terminate as it may, I have only to perform my job, and leave the event to be decided by the combatants.

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terrâ ingentem alterius spectare laborem.

Adieu, my dear friend, I am most sincerely yours,

W. C.

Why should you suppose that I did not admire the poem you showed me? I did admire it, and told you so, but you carried it off in your pocket, and so doing left me to forget it, and without the means of inquiry.

I am thus nimble in answering, merely with a view to ensure myself the receipt of other remarks in time for a new impression.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, Dec. 10, 1791.

Dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work rather than in translation. To tell the truth, I am of your mind: and, unless I could find another Homer, I shall promise (I believe) and vow, when I have done with Milton, never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian; and consequently I am happy, and feel myself honorably employed whatever I do for Milton. I am now translating his *Epitaphium Damonis*, a pastoral in my judgment equal to any

* Fuseli was associated with Cowper's Milton, and Boydell interested in Hayley's, which produced a collision of feeling between them.

of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pleased him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously. But he who never saw any beauty in a rural scene, was not likely to have much taste for a pastoral. *In pace quiescat!*

I was charmed with your friendly offer to be my advocate with the public; should I want one, I know not where I could find a better. The reviewer in the Gentleman's Magazine grows more and more civil. Should he continue to sweeten at this rate, as he proceeds, I know not what will become of all the little modesty I have left. I have availed myself of some of his strictures, for I wish to learn from everybody.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Dec. 21, 1791.

My dear Friend,—It grieves me, after having indulged a little hope that I might see you in the holidays, to be obliged to disappoint myself. The occasion, too, is such as will ensure me your sympathy.

On Saturday last, while I was at my desk near the window, and Mrs. Unwin at the fireside opposite to it, I heard her suddenly exclaim, "Oh! Mr. Cowper, don't let me fall!" I turned and saw her actually falling, together with her chair, and started to her side just in time to prevent her. She was seized with a violent giddiness, which lasted, though with some abatement, the whole day, and was attended too with some other very, very alarming symptoms. At present, however, she is relieved from the vertigo, and seems in all respects better.

She has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has them, and will have them as long as she wants them; which will probably be, at the best, a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it. Another such a stroke upon her would, I think, overset me completely; but at present I hold up bravely. W. C.

Few events could have afflicted the tender and affectionate mind of Cowper more acutely than the distressing incident recorded in the preceding letter. Mrs. Unwin had for some time past experienced frequent returns of headache, sensations of bodily pain, and an increasing incapacity even for the common routine of daily duties. By an intelligent observer these symptoms might have been interpreted as the precursors of some impending dispensation, in the same manner as the gathering clouds and the solemn stillness of nature announce the approaching storm and tempest. But the stroke is not the less felt because it is anticipated. Among the sorrows which inflict a wound on the feeling heart, to see a beloved object, identified in character, in sentiment, and pursuit, endeared to us by the memory of the past, and by the fears and anxieties of the present, sinking under the slow yet consuming incursions of disease; and to be assured, as we contemplate the fading form, that the moment of separation is drawing nigh; this is indeed a trial, where the mind feels its own bitterness, and is awakened to the strongest emotions of tenderness and love.

The cheering prospect of a happy change, founded on an interest in the promises of the gospel, can alone mitigate the mournful anticipation. It is a subject for deep thankfulness when we can cherish the persuasion for ourselves, or, like Cowper, feel its consoling support for others; and when we are enabled to exclaim with the poet,

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made;
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

Waller's Divine Poesie.

The following letter communicates some further details of Mrs. Unwin's severe attack, and of Cowper's feelings on this distressing occasion.

TO MRS. KING.*

Weston, Jan. 26, 1792.

My dear Madam,—Silent as I have long been, I have had but too good a reason for being so. About six weeks since, Mrs. Unwin was seized with a sudden and most alarming disorder, a vertigo, which would have thrown her out of her chair to the ground, had I not been quick enough to catch her while she was falling. For some moments her knees and ancles were so entirely disabled that she had no use of them; and it was with the exertion of all my strength that I replaced her in her seat. Many days she kept her bed, and for some weeks her chamber; but, at length, she has joined me again in the study. Her recovery has been extremely slow, and she is still feeble; but, I thank God, not so feeble but that I hope for her perfect restoration as the spring advances. I am persuaded, that with your feelings for your friends, you will know how to imagine what I must have suffered on an occasion so distressing, and to pardon a silence owing to such a cause.

The account you give me of the patience with which a lady of your acquaintance has

* Private correspondence.

lately endured a terrible operation, is a strong proof that your sex surpasses ours in heroic fortitude. I call it by that name, because I verily believe, that in God's account, there is more true heroism in suffering his will with meek submission than in doing our own, or that of our fellow-mortals who may have a right to command us, with the utmost valor that was ever exhibited in a field of battle. Renown and glory are, in general, the incitements to such exertions; but no laurels are to be won by sitting patiently under the knife of a surgeon. The virtue is, therefore, of a less suspicious character: the principle of it more simple, and the practice more difficult;—considerations that seem sufficiently to warrant my opinion, that the infallible Judge of human conduct may possibly behold with more complacency a suffering than an active courage.

I forget if I told you that I am engaged for a new edition of Milton's Poems. In fact, I have still other engagements, and so various, that I hardly know to which of them all to give my first attentions. I have only time, therefore, to condole with you on the double loss you have lately sustained, and to congratulate you on being female; because, as such, you will, I trust, acquit yourself well under so severe a trial.

I remain, my dear madam,
Most sincerely yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Feb. 14, 1792.

My dear Friend,—It is the only advantage I believe, that they who love each other derive from living at a distance, that the news of such ills as may happen to either seldom reaches the other till the cause of complaint is over. Had I been your next neighbor, I should have suffered with you during the whole indisposition of your two children and your own. As it is, I have nothing to do but to rejoice in your own recovery and theirs, which I do sincerely, and wish only to learn from yourself that it is complete.

I thank you for suggesting the omission of the line due to the helmet of Achilles. How the omission happened I know not, whether by my fault or the printer's; it is certain, however, that I had translated it, and I have now given it its proper place.

I purpose to keep back a second edition till I have had opportunity to avail myself of the remarks of both friends and strangers. The ordeal of criticism still awaits me in the reviews, and probably they will all in their turn mark many things that may be mended. By the Gentleman's Magazine I have already profited in several instances. My reviewer there, though favorable in the main, is a pretty close observer, and, though not always right, is often so.

In the affair of Milton I will have no *horrida bella* if I can help it.* It is at least my present purpose to avoid them, if possible. For which reason, unless I should soon see occasion to alter my plan, I shall confine myself merely to the business of an annotator, which is my proper province, and shall sift out of Warton's notes every tittle that relates to the private character, political or religious principles, of my author. These are properly subjects for a biographer's handling, but by no means, as it seems to me, for a commentator's.

In answer to your question, if I have had a correspondence with the Chancellor, I reply—yes. We exchanged three or four letters on the subject of Homer, or rather on the subject of my Preface. He was doubtful whether or not my preference of blank verse, as affording opportunity for a closer version, was well founded. On this subject he wished to be convinced; defended rhyme with much learning, and much shrewd reasoning; but at last allowed me the honor of the victory, expressing himself in these words:—"*I am clearly convinced that Homer may be best rendered in blank verse, and you have succeeded in the passages that I have looked into.*"

Thus it is when a wise man differs in opinion. Such a man will be candid; and conviction, not triumph, will be his object.

Adieu!—The hard name I gave you I take to myself, and am your

εκπαγλόταος,

W. C.

We are indebted to a friend for the opportunity of inserting nine additional letters, addressed by Cowper to Thomas Park, Esq., known as the author of "Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems," and subsequently as the editor of that splendid work, "Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors."

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, Feb. 19, 1792.

Dear Sir,—Yesterday evening your parcel came safe to hand, containing the "Cursory Remarks," "Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdesse," and your kind letter, for all which I am much obliged to you.

Everything that relates to Milton must be welcome to an editor of him; and I am so unconnected with the learned world, that, unless assistance seeks *me*, I am not very likely to find it. Fletcher's work was not in my possession; nor, indeed, was I possessed of any other, when I engaged in this under-

* He alludes to the dispute between Boydell and Fuseli the painter.

taking, that could serve me much in the performance of it. The various untoward incidents of a very singular life have deprived me of a valuable collection, partly inherited from my father, partly from my brother,* and partly made by myself; so that I have at present fewer books than any man ought to have who writes for the public, especially who assumes the character of an editor. At the present moment, however, I find myself tolerably well provided for this occasion by the kindness of a few friends, who have not been backward to pick from their shelves everything that they thought might be useful to me. I am happy to be able to number you among these friendly contributors.

You will add a considerable obligation to those you have already conferred, if you will be so good as to furnish me with such notices of your own as you offer. Parallel passages, or, at least, a striking similarity of expression, is always worthy of remark; and I shall reprint, I believe, all Mr. Warton's notes of that kind, except such as are rather trivial, and some, perhaps, that are a little whimsical, and except that I shall diminish the number of his references, which are not seldom redundant. Where a word only is in question, and that, perhaps, not an uncommon one in the days of Milton, his use of it proves little or nothing; for it is possible that authors writing on similar subjects may use the same words by mere accident. Borrowing seems to imply poverty, and of poverty I can rather suspect any man than Milton. But I have as yet determined nothing absolutely concerning the mode of my commentary, having hitherto been altogether busied in the translation of his Latin poems. These I have finished, and shall immediately proceed to a version of the Italian. They, being few, will not detain me long; and, when they are done, will leave me at full liberty to deliberate on the main business, and to plan and methodise my operations.

I shall be always happy in, and account myself honored by, your communications, and hope that our correspondence thus begun will not terminate *in limine primo*.

I am, my dear sir, with much respect,
Your most obliged and humble servant,
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Weston, Feb. 20, 1792.

My dear Friend,—When I wrote the lines in question, I was, as I almost always am, so pressed for time, that I was obliged to put them down in a great hurry.* Perhaps I printed them wrong. If a full stop be made at the end of the second line, the appearance of inconsistency, perhaps, will vanish; but should you still think them liable to that objection, they may be altered thus:—

In vain to live from age to age
We modern bards endeavor;
But write in Patty's book one page,†
You gain your point forever.

Trifling enough I readily confess they are: but I have always allowed myself to trifle occasionally; and on this occasion had not, nor have at present, time to do more. By the way, should you think this amended copy worthy to displace the former, I must wait for some future opportunity to send you them properly transcribed for the purpose.

Your demand of more original composition from me will, if I live, and it please God to afford me health, in all probability be sooner or later gratified. In the mean time, you need not, and, if you turn the matter in your thoughts a little, you will perceive that you need not, think me unworthily employed in preparing a new edition of Milton. His two principal poems are of a kind that call for an editor who believes the gospel and is well grounded in all evangelical doctrine. Such an editor they have never had yet, though only such a one can be qualified for the office.

We mourn for the mismanagement at Botany Bay, and foresee the issue. The Romans were, in their origin, banditti; and if they became in time masters of the world, it was not by drinking grog, and allowing themselves in all sorts of licentiousness. The African colonization, and the manner of conducting it, has long been matter to us of pleasing speculation. God has highly honored Mr. Thornton; and I doubt not that the subsequent history of the two settlements will strikingly evince the superior wisdom of his proceedings.‡

Yours, W. C.

P. S. Lady Hesketh made the same objection to my verses as you; but, she being a lady-critic, I did not heed her. As they stand at present, however, they are hers; and I believe you will think them much improved.

* The Rev. John Cowper, Fellow of Bennet College, Cambridge.

"I had a brother once,
Peace to the memory of a man of worth," &c. &c.

† Private correspondence.

* Mrs. Martha More had requested Cowper to furnish a contribution to her collection of autographs. The result appears in the sequel of this letter.

† In the present edition of the Poems the lines stand thus, on a farther suggestion of Lady Hesketh's:—

In vain to live from age to age,
While modern bards endeavor,
I write my name in Patty's page,
And gain my point for ever.
W. COWPER.

March 6, 1792.

‡ This alludes to the new colony for liberated Africans, at Sierra Leone; in the origin of which Mr. Henry Thornton and Mr. Zachary Macauley were mainly instrumental. For interesting accounts of this colony, see the "Missionary Register of the Church Missionary Society," *passim*.

My heart bears me witness how glad I shall be to see you at the time you mention; and Mrs. Unwin says the same.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, Feb. 21, 1792.

My dear Sir,—My obligations to you on the score of your kind and friendly remarks demanded from me a much more expeditious acknowledgment of the numerous packets that contained them; but I have been hindered by many causes, each of which you would admit as a sufficient apology, but none of which I will mention, lest I should give too much of my paper to the subject. My acknowledgments are likewise due to your fair sister, who has transcribed so many sheets in a neat hand, and with so much accuracy.

At present I have no leisure for Homer, but shall certainly find leisure to examine him with reference to your strictures, before I send him a second time to the printer. This I am at present unwilling to do, choosing rather to wait, if that may be, till I shall have undergone the discipline of all the reviewers; none of which have yet taken me in hand, the Gentleman's Magazine excepted. By several of his remarks I have benefitted, and shall no doubt be benefitted by the remarks of all.

Milton at present engrosses me altogether. His Latin pieces I have translated, and have begun with the Italian. These are few, and will not detain me long. I shall then proceed immediately to deliberate upon and to settle the plan of my commentary, which I have hitherto had but little time to consider. I look forward to it, for this reason, with some anxiety. I trust at least that this anxiety will cease when I have once satisfied myself about the best manner of conducting it. But, after all, I seem to fear more about the labor to which it calls me than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended. To the labors of versifying I have no objection, but to the labors of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case, I shall be dull, and must be contented to share the censure of being so with almost all the commentators that have ever existed.

I have expected, but not wondered that I have not received, Sir Thomas More and the other MSS. you promised me; because my silence has been such, considering how loudly I was called upon to write, that you must have concluded me either dead or dying, and did not choose perhaps to trust them to executors. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, March 2, 1792.

My dear Sir,—I have this moment finished a comparison of your remarks with my text, and feel so sensibly my obligations to your great accuracy and kindness, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of expressing them immediately. I only wish that instead of revising the two first books of the Iliad, you could have found leisure to revise the whole two poems, sensible how much my work would have benefitted.

I have not always adopted your lines, though often, perhaps, at least as good as my own; because there will and must be dissimilarity of manner between two so accustomed to the pen as we are. But I have let few passages go unamended which you seemed to think exceptionable; and this not at all from complaisance; for in such a cause I would not sacrifice an iota on that principle, but on clear conviction.

I have as yet heard nothing from Johnson about the two MSS. you announced, but feel ashamed that I should want your letter to remind me of your obliging offer to inscribe Sir Thomas More to me, should you resolve to publish him. Of my consent to such a measure you need not doubt. I am covetous of respect and honor from all such as you.

Tame hare, at present, I have none. But, to make amends, I have a beautiful little spaniel, called Beau, to whom I will give the kiss your sister Sally intended for the former, unless she should command me to bestow it elsewhere; it shall attend on her directions.

I am going to take a last dinner with a most agreeable family, who have been my only neighbors ever since I have lived at Weston. On Monday they go to London, and in the summer to an estate in Oxfordshire, which is to be their home in future. The occasion is not at all a pleasant one to me, nor does it leave me spirits to add more, than that I am, dear sir,

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, March 4, 1792.

My dear Friend,—All our little world is going to London, the gulf that swallows most of our good things, and, like a bad stomach, too often assimilates them to itself. Our neighbors at the Hall go thither to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, as we lately called them, but now Sir John and my Lady, are no longer inhabitants here, but henceforth of Bucklands, in Berkshire. I feel the loss of them, and shall feel it, since kinder or more friendly treatment I never can receive at any hands than I have always found at theirs. But it has long been a foreseen change, and was, indeed, almost daily expected long before it happened. The desertion of the Hall, however, will not be total. The second brother,

* Private correspondence.

George, now Mr. Courtenay,* intends to reside there: and, with him, as with his elder brother, I have always been on terms the most agreeable.

Such is this variable scene: so variable that, had the reflections I sometimes make upon it a permanent influence, I should tremble at the thought of a new connexion, and, to be out of the reach of its mutability, lead almost the life of a hermit. It is well with those who, like you, have God for their companion. Death cannot deprive them of Him, and he changes not the place of his abode. Other changes, therefore, to them are all supportable; and what you say of your own experience is the strongest possible proof of it. Had you lived without God, you could not have endured the loss you mention. May He preserve me from a similar one; at least, till he shall be pleased to draw me to himself again? Then, if ever that day come, it will make me equal to any burden; but at present I can bear nothing well.

I am sincerely yours, W. C.

TO MRS. KING.†

Weston, March 8, 1792.

My dear Madam,—Having just finished all my Miltonic translations, and not yet begun my comments, I find an interval that cannot be better employed than in discharging arrears due to my correspondents, of whom I begin first a letter to you, though your claim be of less ancient standing than those of all the rest.

I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and especially that your indisposition has been attended with such excessive pain. But may I be permitted to observe, that your going to church on Christmas-day, immediately after such a sharp fit of rheumatism, was not according to the wisdom with which I believe you to be endued, nor was it acting so charitably toward yourself as I am persuaded you would have acted toward another. To another you would, I doubt not, have suggested that text —"I will have mercy and not sacrifice," as implying a gracious dispensation, in circumstances like yours, from the practice of so severe and dangerous a service.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, is better, but still wants much of complete restoration. We have reached a time of life when heavy blows, if not fatal, are at least long felt.

I have received many testimonies concerning my Homer, which do me much honor, and afford me great satisfaction; but none from which I derive, or have reason to derive, more than that of Mr. Martyn. It is of great use to me, when I write, to suppose some such person at my elbow, witnessing what I do; and I ask myself frequently—Would this please him? If I think it would, it stands: if otherwise, I alter it. My work is thus finished, as it were, under the eye of some of the best judges, and has the better chance to win their approbation when they actually see it.

I am, my dear madam
Affectionately yours, W. C.

* Afterwards Sir George Throckmorton.
† Private correspondence.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, March 10, 1792.

Dear Sir,—You will have more candor, as I hope and believe, than to impute my delay to answer your kind and friendly letter to inattention or want of a cordial respect for the writer of it. To suppose any such cause of my silence were injustice both to yourself and me. The truth is, I am a very busy man, and cannot gratify myself with writing to my friends so punctually as I wish.

You have not in the least fallen in my esteem on account of your employment,* as you seemed to apprehend that you might. It is an elegant one, and, when you speak modestly, as you do, of your proficiency in it, I am far from giving you entire credit for the whole assertion. I had indeed supposed you a person of independent fortune, who had nothing to do but to gratify himself; and whose mind, being happily addicted to literature, was at full leisure to enjoy its innocent amusement. But it seems I was mistaken, and your time is principally due to an art which has a right pretty much to engross your attention, and which gives rather the air of an intrigue to your intercourse and familiarity with the muses than a lawful connexion. No matter: I am not prudish in this respect, but honor you the more for a passion, virtuous and laudable in itself; and which you indulge not, I dare say, without benefit to yourself and your acquaintance. I, for one, am likely to reap the fruit of your amours, and ought therefore, to be one of the last to quarrel with them.

You are in danger, I perceive, of thinking of me more highly than you ought to think.

* Mezzotinto engraving. Mr. Park, in early youth, fluctuated in the choice between the sister arts of poetry, music, and painting, and composed the following lines to record the result.

By fancy warm'd, I seiz'd the quill,
And poetry the strain inspir'd;
Music improv'd it by her skill,
Till I with both their charms was fir'd.

Won by the graces each display'd,
Their younger sister I forgot;
Though first to her my vows were paid,—
By fate or choice it matters not.

She, jealous of their rival powers,
And to repay the injury done,
Condemn'd me through life's future hours,
All to admire, but wed with none.

T. P.

I am not one of the *literati*, among whom you seem disposed to place me. Far from it. I told you in my last how heinously I am unprovided with the means of being so, having long since sent all my books to market. My learning accordingly lies in a very narrow compass. It is school-boy learning somewhat improved, and very little more. From the age of twenty to twenty-three, I was occupied, or ought to have been, in the study of the law. From thirty-three to sixty I have spent my time in the country, where my reading has been only an apology for idleness, and where, when I had not either a magazine or a review in my hand, I was sometimes a carpenter, at others a birdcage maker, or a gardener, or a drawer of landscapes. At fifty years of age I commenced an author. It is a whim that has served me longest and best, and which will probably be my last.

Thus you see I have had very little opportunity to become what is property called—*learned*. In truth, having given myself so entirely of late to poetry, I am not sorry for this deficiency, since great learning, I have been sometimes inclined to suspect, is rather a hindrance to the fancy than a furtherance.

You will do me a favor by sending me a copy of Thomson's monumental inscription. He was a poet, for whose memory, as you justly suppose, I have great respect; in common, indeed, with all who have ever read him with taste and attention.

Wishing you heartily success in your present literary undertaking and in all professional ones, I remain,

Dear sir, with great esteem,
Sincerely yours, W. C.

P. S. After what I have said, I will not blush to confess, that I am at present perfectly unacquainted with the merits of Drummond,* but shall be happy to see him in due time, as I should be to see see any author edited by *you*.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, March 11, 1792.

My dear Johnny,—You talk of primroses that you pulled on Candlemas-day; but what think you of me that heard a nightingale on new-year's day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune; good indeed, for if it was at all an omen it could not be an unfavorable one. The winter, however, is now making himself amends, and seems the more peevish for having been encroached on at so undue a season. Nothing less than a large slice out of the spring will satisfy him.

Lady Hesketh left us yesterday. She intended to have left us four days sooner; but in the evening before the day fixed for her departure, snow enough fell to occasion just so much delay of it.

We have faint hopes that in the month of May we shall see her again. I know that you have had a letter from her, and you will no doubt have the grace not to make her wait long for an answer.

We expect Mr. Rose on Tuesday; but he stays with us only till the Saturday following. With him I shall have some conferences on the subject of Homer, respecting a new edition I mean, and some perhaps on the subject of Milton; on him I have not yet begun to comment, or even fix the time when I shall.

Forget not your promised visit!

W. C.

We add the verses composed by Cowper on the extraordinary incident mentioned at the beginning of the preceding letter.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY, 1792.

Whence is it, that amaz'd I hear,
From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favor shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practis'd in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee, in song.

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm.
Who only need'st to sing,
To make e'en January charm,
And ev'ry season spring.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, March 18, 1792.

My dear Friend,—We are now once more reduced to our dual state, having lost our

* Drummond, an elegant Scottish poet, born in 1585. His works, though not free from the conceits of the Italian School, are characterised by much delicacy of taste and feeling. There is a peculiar melody and sweetness in his verse, and his sonnets particularly have procured for him a fame, which has survived to the present time. An edition of his Poems was published in 1791, by Cowper's correspondent, Mr. Park.

* Private correspondence.

neighbors at the Hall and our inmate Lady Hesketh. Mr. Rose indeed, has spent two or three days here, and is still with us, but he leaves us in the afternoon. There are those in the world whom we love, and whom we are happy to see; but we are happy likewise in each other, and so far independent of our fellow mortals as to be able to pass our time comfortably without them:—as comfortably, at least, as Mrs. Unwin's frequent indispositions, and my no less frequent troubles of mind, will permit. When I am much distressed, any company but hers distresses me more, and makes me doubly sensible of my sufferings, though sometimes, I confess, it falls out otherwise; and, by the help of more general conversation, I recover that elasticity of mind which is able to resist the pressure. On the whole, I believe I am situated exactly as I should wish to be, were my situation to be determined by my own election; and am denied no comfort that is compatible with the total absence of the chief of all.

Adieu, my dear friend,

I remain, affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, March 23, 1792.

My dear Sir,—I have read your play carefully, and with great pleasure: it seems now to be a performance that cannot fail to do you much credit. Yet, unless my memory deceives me, the scene between Cecilia and Heron in the garden has lost something that pleased me much when I saw it first; and I am not sure that you have not likewise obliterated an account of Sir Thomas's execution, that I found very pathetic. It would be strange if, in these two particulars, I should seem to miss what never existed; you will presently know whether I am as good at remembering what I never saw as I am at forgetting what I have seen. But if I am right, I cannot help recommending the omitted passages to your re-consideration. If the play were designed for representation, I should be apt to think Cecilia's first speech rather too long, and should prefer to have it broken into dialogue, by an interposition now and then from one of her sisters. But, since it is designed, as I understand, for the closet only, that objection seems of no importance; at no rate, however, would I expunge it, because it is both prettily imagined and elegantly written.

I have read your *cursory remarks*, and am much pleased both with the style and the argument. Whether the latter be new or not I am not competent to judge; if it be, you are entitled to much praise for the invention of it. Where other data are wanting to ascertain the time when an author of many pieces wrote each in particular, there can be no better criterion by which to determine the point than the more or less proficiency manifested in the composition. Of this proficiency, where it appears, and of those plays in which it appears not, you seem to have judged well and truly, and, consequently, I approve of your arrangement.

I attended, as you desired me, in reading the character of Cecilia, to the hint you gave me concerning your sister Sally, and give you joy of such a sister. This, however, not exclusively of the rest, for, though they may not all be Cecilias, I have a strong persuasion that they are all very amiable. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 25, 1792.

My dearest Coz.,—Mr. Rose's longer stay than he at first intended was the occasion of the longer delay of my answer to your note, as you may both have perceived by the date thereof, and learned from his information. It was a daily trouble to me to see it lying in the window-seat, while I knew you were in expectation of its arrival. By this time I presume you have seen him, and have seen likewise Mr. Hayley's friendly letter and complimentary sonnet, as well as the letter of the honest Quaker; all of which, at least the two former, I shall be glad to receive again at a fair opportunity. Mr. Hayley's letter slept six weeks in Johnson's custody.* It was necessary that I should answer it without delay, and accordingly I answered it the very evening on which I received it, giving him to understand, among other things, how much vexation the bookseller's folly had cost me, who had detained it so long: especially on account of the distress that I knew it must have occasioned to him also. From his reply, which the return of the post brought me, I learn that in the long interval of my non-correspondence, he had suffered anxiety and mortification enough; so much, that I dare say he made twenty vows never to hazard again either letter or compliment to an unknown author. What, indeed, could he imagine less than that I meant by such an obstinate silence to tell him that I valued neither him nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship; in short, that I considered him as a rival, and therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him? He is now, however, convinced that I love him, as indeed I

* We have already stated that Hayley was engaged in a life of Milton, when Cowper was announced as editor of Johnson's projected work. With a generosity that reflects the highest credit on his feelings, he addressed a letter on this occasion to Cowper, accompanied by a complimentary sonnet, and offering his kind aid in any way that might prove most acceptable. The letter was entrusted to the bookseller, who delayed transmitting it six weeks, and thereby created great anxiety in Hayley's mind.

do, and I account him the chief acquisition that my own verse has ever procured me. Brute should I be if I did not, for he promises me every assistance in his power.

I have likewise a very pleasing letter from Mr. Park, which I wish you were here to read; and a very pleasing poem that came enclosed in it for my revisal, written when he was only twenty years of age, yet wonderfully well written, though wanting some correction.

To Mr. Hurdis I return Sir Thomas More to-morrow, having revised it a second time. He is now a very respectable figure, and will do my friend, who gives him to the public this spring, considerable credit. W. C.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, March 30, 1792.

My dear Sir,—If you have indeed so favorable an opinion of my judgment as you profess, which I shall not allow myself to question, you will think highly and honorably of your poem,* for so I think of it. The view you give of the place that you describe is clear and distinct, the sentiments are just, the reflections touching, and the numbers uncommonly harmonious. I give you joy of having been able to produce, at twenty years of age, what would not have disgraced you at a much later period; and, if you choose to print it, have no doubt that it will do you great credit.

You will perceive, however, when you receive your copy again, that I have used all the liberty you gave me. I have proposed many alterations; but you will consider them as only proposed. My lines are by no means obtruded on you, but are ready to give place to any that you shall choose to substitute of your own composing. They will serve at least to mark the passages which seem to me susceptible of improvement, and the manner in which I think the change may be made. I have not always, seldom, indeed, given my reasons; but without a reason I have altered nothing, and the decision, as I say, is left with you in the last instance. Time failed me to be particular and explicit always, in accounting for my strictures, and I assured myself that you would impute none of them to an arbitrary humor, but all to their true cause—a desire to discharge faithfully the trust committed to me.

I cannot but add, I think it a pity that you, who have evidently such talents for poetry, should be so loudly called another way, and want leisure to cultivate them, for if such was the bud, what might we not have expected to see in the full-blown flower? Perhaps, however, I am not quite prudent in saying all this to you, whose proper function is not that of a poet, but I say it, trusting to *your* prudence, that you will not suffer it to seduce you.

I have not the edition of Milton's juvenile poems which you mention, but shall be truly glad to see it, and thank you for the offer.

No possible way occurs to me of returning your MS. but by the Wellingborough coach; by that conveyance, therefore, I shall send it on Monday, and my remarks, rough as I made them, shall accompany it.

Believe me, with much sincerity,

Yours, W. C.

* A juvenile offering of gratitude to the place where the writer had received his education.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, March 30, 1792.

My dear Friend,—My mornings, ever since you went, have been given to my correspondents; this morning I have already written a long letter to Mr. Park, giving my opinion of his poem, which is a favorable one. I forget whether I showed it to you when you were here, and even whether I had then received it. He has genius and delicate taste; and, if he were not an engraver, might be one of our first hands in poetry.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, April 5, 1792.

You talk, my dear friend, as John Bunyan says, "like one that has the egg-shell still upon his head." You talk of the mighty favors that you have received from me, and forget entirely those for which I am indebted to you; but though you forget them, I shall not, nor ever think that I have requited you, so long as any opportunity presents itself of rendering you the smallest service; small indeed is all that I can ever hope to render.

You now perceive, and sensibly, that not without reason I complained, as I use to do, of those tiresome rogues, the printers. Bless yourself that you have not two thick quartos to bring forth, as I had. My vexation was always much increased by this reflection—they are every day, and all day long, employed in printing for somebody, and why not for me? This was adding mortification to disappointment, so that I often lost all patience.

The suffrage of Dr. Robertson makes more than amends for the scurvy jest passed upon me by the wag unknown. I regard him not; nor, except for about two moments after I first heard of his doings, have I ever regarded him. I have somewhere a secret enemy; I know not for what cause he should be so, but he, I imagine, supposes that he has a cause: it is well, however, to have but

one; and I will take all the care I can not to increase the number.

I have begun my notes, and am playing the commentator manfully. The worst of it is that I am anticipated in almost all my opportunities to shine by those who have gone before me. W. C.

The following letter is the commencement of Cowper's correspondence with Hayley, originating in the circumstances already detailed to the reader.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, April 6, 1792.

My dear Friend,—God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and, especially where suddenly formed, they are apt soon to terminate! But, as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart toward you that I never felt for one whom I had never seen, and that shall prove itself, I trust, in the event, a propitious omen.

Horace says somewhere, though I may quote it amiss, perhaps, for I have a terrible memory,

> "Utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
> Consentit astrum."

. . . Our *stars consent*, at least have had an influence somewhat similar, in another and more important article. . . .

It gives me the sincerest pleasure that I may hope to see you at Weston; for, as to any migrations of mine, they must, I fear, notwithstanding the joy I should feel in being a guest of yours, be still considered in the light of impossibilities. Come, then, my friend, and be as welcome (as the country people say here) as the flowers in May! I am happy, as I say, in expectation; but the fear, or rather the consciousness, that I shall not answer on a nearer view, makes it a trembling kind of happiness and a doubtful.

After the privacy which I have mentioned above, I went to Huntingdon; soon after my arrival there, I took up my quarters at the house of the Rev. Mr. Unwin; I lived with him while he lived, and ever since his death have lived with his widow. Her, therefore, you will find mistress of the house; and I judge of you amiss, or you will find her just such as you would wish. To me she has been often a nurse, and invariably the kindest friend, through a thousand adversities that I have had to grapple with in the course of almost thirty years. I thought it better to introduce her to you thus, than to present her to you at your coming, quite a stranger.

Bring with you any books that you think may be useful to my commentatorship, for, with you for an interpreter, I shall be afraid of none of them. And, in truth, if you think that you shall want them, you must bring books for your own use also, for they are an article with which I am *heinously unprovided:* being much in the condition of the man whose library Pope describes as

> "No mighty store!
> His own works neatly bound, and little more!"

You shall know how this has come to pass hereafter.

Tell me, my friend, are your letters in your own hand-writing? If so, I am in pain for your eyes, lest by such frequent demands upon them I should hurt them. I had rather write you three letters for one, much as I prize your letters, than *that* should happen. And now, for the present, adieu,—I am going to accompany Milton into the lake of fire and brimstone, having just begun my annotations. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, April 8, 1792.

My dear Sir,—Your entertaining and pleasant letter, resembling in that respect all that I receive from you, deserved a more expeditious answer, and should have had what it so well deserved, had it not reached me at a time when, deeply in debt to all my correspondents, I had letters to write without number. Like autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in *Vallombrosa*, the unanswered farrago lay before me. If I quote at all, you must expect me henceforth to quote none but Milton, since for a long time to come I shall be occupied with him only.

I was much pleased with the extract you gave me from your sister Eliza's letter; she writes very elegantly, and (if I might say it without seeming to flatter you) I should say much in the manner of her brother. It is well for your sister Sally that gloomy Dis is already a married man, else perhaps finding her, as he found Proserpine, studying botany in the fields, he might transport her to his own flowerless abode, where all her hopes of improvement in that science would be at an end forever.

What letter of the 10th December is that which you say you have not yet answered? Consider, it is April now, and I never remember anything that I write half so long. But perhaps it relates to Calchas, for I do remember that you have not yet furnished me with the secret history of him and his family, which I demanded from you.

Adieu! Yours most sincerely,

W. C.

I rejoice that you are so well with the learned Bishop of Sarum,* and well remember how he ferreted the vermin Lauder† out of all his hidings, when I was a boy at Westminster.

I have not yet studied with your last remarks before me, but hope soon to find an opportunity.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.‡

Weston, April 15, 1792.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for your remittance; which, to use the language of a song much in use when we were boys,

"Adds fresh beauties to the spring,
And makes all nature look more gay."

What the author of the song had particularly in view when he thus sang, I know not; but probably it was not the sum of fifty pounds: which, as probably, he never had the happiness to possess. It was, most probably, some beautiful nymph,—beautiful in his eyes, at least,—who has long since become an old woman.

I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. First, from a sensible little man, curate of a neighboring village;§ then from Walter Bagot; then from Henry Cowper; and now from you. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirized myself in two stanzas which I composed last night, when I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dosed with laudanum. If you find them not very brilliant, therefore, you will know how to account for it.

Cowper had sinn'd with some excuse
If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
Of changing ewes for wethers;

But male for female is a trope,
Or rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope
When he translated Homer.

Having translated all the Latin and Italian Miltonics, I was proceeding merrily with a Commentary on the Paradise Lost, when I was seized, a week since, with a most tormenting disorder; which has qualified me, however, to make some very feeling observations on that passage, when I shall come to it:

"Ill fare our ancestor impure!"

For this we may thank Adam;—and you may thank him, too, that I am not able to fill my sheet, nor endure a writing posture any longer. I conclude abruptly, therefore, but sincerely subscribing myself, with my best compliments to Mrs. Hill,

Your affectionate, W. C.

* Dr. Douglas.

† Lauder endeavored to depreciate the fame of Milton by a charge of plagiarism. Dr. Douglas successfully vindicated the great poet from such an imputation, and proved that it was a gross fiction on the part of Lauder.

‡ Private correspondence.

§ The Rev. John Buchanan.

TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

Weston, April 16, 1792.

My dear Lady Frog,—I thank you for your letter, as sweet as it was short, and as sweet as good news could make it. You encourage a hope that has made me happy ever since I have entertained it. And if my wishes can hasten the event, it will not be long suspended.* As to your jealousy, I mind it not, or only to be pleased with it; I shall say no more on the subject at present than this, that of all ladies living, a certain lady, whom I need not name, would be the lady of my choice for a certain gentleman, were the whole sex submitted to my election.

What a delightful anecdote is that which you tell me of a young lady detected in the very act of stealing our Catharina's praises; is it possible that she can survive the shame, the mortification of such a discovery? Can she ever see the same company again, or any company that she can suppose, by the remotest possibility, may have heard the tidings? If she can, she must have an assurance equal to her vanity. A lady in London stole my song on the broken Rose, or rather would have stolen and have passed it for her own. But she too was unfortunate in her attempt; for there happened to be a female cousin of mine in company, who knew that I had written it. It is very flattering to a poet's pride that the ladies should thus hazard everything for the sake of appropriating his verses. I may say with Milton that I am fallen *on evil tongues, and evil days*, being not only plundered of that which belongs to me, but being charged with that which does not. Thus it seems (and I have learned it from more quarters than one) that a report is, and has been sometime, current in this and the neighboring counties, that, though I have given myself the air of declaiming against the Slave Trade in "The Task," I am in reality a friend to it; and last night I received a letter from Joe Rye, to inform me that I have been much traduced and calumniated on this account. Not knowing how I could better or more effectually refute the scandal, I have this morning sent a copy to the Northampton paper, prefaced by a short letter to the printer, specifying the occasion. The verses are in honor of Mr. Wilberforce, and sufficiently expressive of

* The prospect of a marriage between Miss Stapleton, the Catharina of Cowper, and Mr. Courtenay, Sir John Throckmorton's brother.

my present sentiments on the subject. You are a wicked fair one for disappointing us of our expected visit, and therefore, out of mere spite, I will not insert them. I have been very ill these ten days, and for the same spite's sake will not tell you what has ailed me. But, lest you should die of a fright, I will have the mercy to tell you that I am recovering.

Mrs. Gifford and her little ones are gone, but your brother is still here. He told me that he had some expectations of Sir John at Weston; if he come, I shall most heartily rejoice once more to see him at a table so many years his own. W. C.

We subjoin the verses addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, intended to vindicate Cowper from the charge of lukewarmness in such a cause.

SONNET.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee by cruel men and impious, call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slav'ry's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labor such as thine be vain!
Thou hast achiev'd a part, hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause: [pause
Hope smiles, joy springs, and tho' cold caution
And weave delay, the better hour is near,
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenc'd with British laws.
Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth and all the blest above!

In detailing the incidents that occur in the life of Cowper, we have just recorded a malevolent report, highly injurious to his integrity and honor. In order to recall the fact to the memory of the reader, we insert the statement itself, in the words of Cowper: "A report is, and has been some time current, in this and the neighboring counties, that, though I have given myself the air of declaiming against the slave trade in 'The Task,' I am in reality a friend to it; and last night I received a letter from Joe Rye, to inform me; that I have been much traduced and calumniated on this account."

That the author of "The Task," a poem distinguished by its tone of pure and elevated morality, and breathing a spirit of most uncompromising hostility against the slave trade —that such a man, at that time in the very zenith of his fame, should be publicly accused of favoring the very cause which he had so eloquently denounced, is one of those circumstances which, for the honor of human nature, we could wish not to have been compelled to record.

With this painful fact before us, we would ask, what is popularity, and what wise man would attach value to so fleeting a possession? It is a gleam of sunshine, which embellishes for a moment the object on which it falls, and then vanishes away. In the course of a life not passed without observation, we have had occasion to remark, in the political, the literary, and even in the religious world, the evanescent character of popular favor. We have seen men alternately caressed and deserted, praised and censured, and made to feel the vanity of human applause and admiration. The idol of to-day is dethroned by the idol of to-morrow, which, in its turn, yields to the dominion of some more favored rival.

The wisdom of God evidently designs, by these events, to check the thirst for human praise and distinction, by showing us the precarious tenure by which they are held. We are thus admonished to examine our motives, and to be assured of the integrity of our intentions; neither to despise public favor, nor yet to overvalue it; but to preserve that calm and equable temper of mind, and that full consciousness of the rectitude of our principles, that we may learn to enjoy it without triumph, or to lose it without dejection.

"Henceforth
Thy patron He whose diadem has dropp'd
Yon gems of heaven; eternity thy prize;
And leave the racers of this world their own."

The reader will be amused in finding the origin of the injurious report above mentioned disclosed in the following letter. Mr. Rye was unjustly supposed to have aided in propagating this misconception; but Cowper fully vindicates him from such a charge.

TO THE REV. J. JEKYLL RYE.*

Weston, April 16, 1792.

My dear Sir,—I am truly sorry that you should have suffered any apprehensions, such as your letter indicates, to molest you for a moment. I believe you to be as honest a man as lives, and consequently do not believe it possible that you could in your letter to Mr. Pitts, or any otherwise, wilfully misrepresent me. In fact you did not; my opinions on the subject in question were, when I had the pleasure of seeing you, such as in that letter you stated them to be, and such they still continue.

If any man concludes, because I allow myself the use of sugar and rum, that therefore I am a friend to the *slave trade*, he concludes rashly, and does me great wrong; for the man lives not who abhors it more than I do. My reasons for my own practice are satisfactory to myself, and they whose practice is contrary, are, I suppose, satisfied with theirs. So

* Vicar of Dallington, near Northampton.

far is good. Let every man act according to his own judgment and conscience; but if we condemn another for not seeing with our eyes, we are unreasonable; and if we reproach him on that account, we are uncharitable, which is a still greater evil.

I had heard, before I received the favor of yours, that such a report of me as you mention had spread about the country. But my information told me that it was founded thus—The people of Olney petitioned parliament for the abolition—My name was sought among the subscribers, but was not found. A question was asked, how that happened? Answer was made, that I had once indeed been an enemy to the slave trade, but had changed my mind, for that, having lately read a history, or an account of Africa, I had seen it there asserted, that till the commencement of that traffic, the negroes, multiplying at a prodigious rate, were necessitated to devour each other; for which reason I had judged it better that the trade should continue, than that they should be again reduced to so horrid a custom.

Now all this is a fable. I have read no such history; I never in my life read any such assertion; nor, had such an assertion presented itself to me, should I have drawn any such conclusion from it. On the contrary, bad as it were, I think it would be better the negroes should even eat one another, than that we should carry them to market. The single reason why I did not sign the petition was, because I was never asked to do it; and the reason why I was never asked was, because I am not a parishioner of Olney.

Thus stands the matter. You will do me the justice, I dare say, to speak of me as of a man who abhors the commerce, which is now, I hope, in a fair way to be abolished, as often as you shall find occasion. And I beg you henceforth to do yourself the justice to believe it impossible that I should, for a moment, suspect you of duplicity or misrepresentation. I have been grossly slandered, but neither by you, nor in consequence of anything that you have either said or written. I remain, therefore, still, as heretofore, with great respect, *much and truly* yours, W. C.

Mrs. Unwin's compliments attend you.

Cowper, on this occasion, addressed the following letter to the editors of the *Northampton Mercury*, enclosing the verses on Mr. Wilberforce which have just been inserted.

TO THE PRINTERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON MERCURY.

Weston-Underwood, April 16, 1792.

Sirs,—Having lately learned that it is pretty generally reported, both in your county and in this, that my present opinion, concerning the slave trade, differs totally from that which I have heretofore given to the public, and that I am no longer an enemy, but a friend to that horrid traffic; I entreat you to take an early opportunity to insert in your paper the following lines,* written no longer since than this very morning, expressly for the two purposes of doing just honor to the gentleman with whose name they are inscribed, and of vindicating myself from an aspersion so injurious.

I am, &c., W. Cowper.

The last two lines in the sonnet, addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, were originally thus expressed:—

Then let them scoff, two prizes thou hast won;
Freedom for captives, and thy God's "Well done."

These were subsequently altered as follow:

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth and all the blest above.

Cowper's version of Homer, which has formed so frequent a subject in the preceding pages, led to a public discussion, in which the interests of literature and the success of his own undertaking were deeply concerned. The question agitated was the relative merits of rhyme and blank verse, in undertaking a translation of that great poet. Johnson, the great dictator in the republic of letters, in his predilection for rhyme, had almost proscribed the use of blank verse in poetical composition. "Poetry," he observes, in his life of Milton, "may subsist without rhyme; but English poetry will not please, nor can rhyme ever be safely spared, but where the subject is able to support itself. Blank verse makes some approach to that which is called the *lapidary style*; has neither the easiness of prose, nor the melody of numbers; and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers without rhyme, whom Milton alleges as precedents, not one is popular. What reason could urge in its defence, has been confuted by the ear."

Johnson, however, makes an exception in the instance of Milton.

"But, whatever be the advantages of rhyme," he adds, "I cannot prevail on myself to wish that Milton had been a rhymer; for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is; yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated. He that thinks himself capable of astonishing, may write blank verse; but those that hope only to please must condescend to rhyme."

In his critique on the "Night Thoughts," he makes a similar concession. "This is one

* See page 396.

of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and constrained by confinement to rhyme."*

Cowper, it will be remembered, questions the correctness of Johnson's taste on this subject, and vindicates the force and majesty of blank verse with much weight of argument. With respect, however, to the important question, how a translation of Homer might be best executed, his sentiments are delivered so much at large in the admirable preface to his version of the Iliad, that we shall lay a few extracts from it before the reader.

"Whether a translation of Homer," he remarks, "may be best executed in blank verse or in rhyme, is a question in the decision of which no man can find difficulty, who has ever duly considered what translation ought to be, or who is in any degree practically acquainted with those very different kinds of versification. I will venture to assert, that a just translation of any ancient poet in rhyme is impossible. No human ingenuity can be equal to the task of closing every couplet with sounds homotonous, expressing at the same time the full sense, and only the full sense, of his original. The translator's ingenuity, indeed, in this case, becomes itself a snare; and the readier he is at invention and expedient, the more likely he is to be betrayed into the widest departure from the guide whom he professes to follow."

It was this acknowledged defect in Pope, that led Cowper to engage in his laborious undertaking of producing a new version.

We admire the candor with which he appreciates the merits of Pope's translation, and yet we cannot refuse to admit the justness of his strictures.

"I have no contest," he observes, "with my predecessor. None is supposable between performers on different instruments. Mr. Pope has surmounted all difficulties in his version of Homer that it was possible to surmount in rhyme. But he was fettered, and his fetters were his choice." "He has given us the *Tale of Troy divine* in smooth verse, generally in correct and elegant language, and in diction often highly poetical. But his deviations are so many, occasioned chiefly by the cause already mentioned, that, much as he has done, and valuable as his work is on some accounts, it was yet in the humble province of a translator, that I thought it possible even for me to follow him with some advantage."

What the reader may expect to discover in the two respective versions is thus described:—"The matter found in me, whether he like it or not, is found also in Homer; and the matter not found in me, how much soever he may admire it, is only found in Mr. Pope. I have omitted nothing; I have invented nothing." "Fidelity is indeed the very essence of translation, and the term itself implies it. For which reason, if we suppress the sense of our original, and force into its place our own, we may call our work an *imitation*, if we please, or perhaps a *paraphrase*, but it is no longer the same author only in a different dress, and therefore it is not a translation."

After dwelling upon the merits and defects of the free and the close translation, and observing that the former can hardly be true to the original author's style and manner, and that the latter is apt to be servile, he thus declares his view of the subject:—"On the whole, the translation which partakes equally of fidelity and liberality, that is close, but not so close as to be servile; free, but not so free as to be licentious, promises fairest; and my ambition will be sufficiently gratified, if such of my readers as are able and will take the pains to compare me in this respect with Homer, shall judge that I have in any measure attained a point so difficult."

He concludes his excellent preface with these interesting words:—

"And now I have only to regret that my pleasant work is ended. To the illustrious Greek I owe the smooth and easy flight of many thousand hours. He has been my companion at home and abroad, in the study, in the garden, and in the field; and no measure of success, let my labors succeed as they may, will ever compensate to me the loss of the innocent luxury that I have enjoyed as a translator of Homer."

Having thus endeavored to do justice to the excellent preface of Cowper, we have reserved an interesting correspondence, which passed between Lord Thurlow and Cowper on this subject, and now introduce it to the notice of the reader. It is without date.

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

My Lord,—A letter reached me yesterday from Henry Cowper, enclosing another from your lordship to himself; of which a passage in my work formed the subject. It gave me the greatest pleasure: your strictures are perfectly just, and here follows the speech of Achilles accommodated to them.

. . . . . .

I did not expect to find your lordship on the side of rhyme, remembering well with how much energy and interest I have heard you repeat passages from the "Paradise

*Young's testimony in favor of blank verse is thus forcibly, though rather pompously expressed:—

"Blank verse is verse unfallen, uncursed; verse reclaimed, re-enthroned in the true language of the gods."

See *Conjectures on Original Composition.*

Lost," which you could not have recited as you did, unless you had been perfectly sensible of their music. It comforts me, therefore, to know that if you have an ear for rhyme, you have an ear for blank verse also.

It seems to me that I may justly complain of rhyme as an inconvenience in translation, even though I assert in the sequel that to me it has been easier to rhyme than to write without, because I always suppose a rhyming translator to ramble, and always obliged to do so. Yet I allow your lordship's version of this speech of Achilles to be very close, and closer much than mine. But I believe that, should either your lordship or I give them burnish or elevation, your lines would be found, in measure as they acquired stateliness, to have lost the merit of fidelity—in which case nothing more would be done than Pope has done already.

I cannot ask your lordship to proceed in your strictures, though I should be happy to receive more of them. Perhaps it is possible that when you retire into the country, you may now and then amuse yourself with my translation. Should your remarks reach me, I promise faithfully that they shall be all most welcome, not only as yours, but because I am sure my work will be the better for them.

With sincere and fervent wishes for your lordship's health and happiness, I remain, my lord, &c. W. C.

The following is Lord Thurlow's reply:—

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

Dear Cowper,—On coming to town this morning, I was surprised particularly at receiving from you an answer to a scrawl I sent Harry, which I have forgot too much to resume now. But I think I could not mean to patronize rhyme. I have fancied that it was introduced to mark the measure in modern languages, because they are less numerous and metrical than the ancient, and the name seems to import as much. Perhaps there was melody in ancient song without straining it to musical notes, as the common Greek pronunciation is said to have had the compass of five parts of an octave. But surely that word is only figuratively applied to modern poetry. Euphony seems to be the highest term it will bear. I have fancied also, that euphony is an impression derived a good deal from habit, rather than suggested by nature; therefore in some degree accidental, and consequently conventional. Else, why can't we bear a drama with rhyme, or the French, one without it? Suppose the "Rape of the Lock," "Windsor Forest," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and many other little poems which please, stripped of the rhyme, which might easily be done, would they please us as well? It would be unfair to treat rondeaus, ballads, and odes in the same manner, because rhyme makes in some sort a part of the conceit. It was this way of thinking which made me suppose that habitual prejudice would miss the rhyme; and that neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared to give their great authors in blank verse.

I wondered to hear you say you thought rhyme easier in original compositions; but you explained it, that you could go further a-field if you were pushed for want of a rhyme. An expression preferred for the sake of the rhyme looks as if it were worth more than you allow. But, to be sure, in translation, the necessity of rhyme imposes very heavy fetters upon those who mean translation, not paraphrase. Our common heroic metre is enough; the pure iambic bearing only a sparing introduction of spondees, trochees, &c., to vary the measure.

Mere translation I take to be impossible, if no metre were required. But the difference of the iambic and heroic measure destroys that at once. It is also impossible to obtain the same sense from a dead language and an ancient author, which those of his own time and country conceived: words and phrases contract, from time and use, such strong shades of difference from their original import. In a living language, with the familiarity of a whole life, it is not easy to conceive truly the actual sense of current expressions, much less of older authors. No two languages furnish *equipollent* words,—their phrases differ, their syntax and their idioms still more widely. But a translation, strictly so called, requires an exact conformity in all those particulars, and also in numbers; therefore it is impossible. I really think at present, notwithstanding the opinion expressed in your preface, that a translator asks himself a good question, How would my author have expressed the sentence I am turning, in English, as literally and fully as the genius, and use, and character of the language will admit of?

In the passage before us, ατττα was the fondling expression of childhood to its parent; and to those who first translated the lines, conveyed feelingly that amiable sentiment. Γεραιε expressed the reverence which naturally accrues to age. Διοτρεφης implies an history. Hospitality was an article of religion; strangers were supposed to be sent by God, and honored accordingly. Jove's altar was placed in ξενοδοχειον. Phœnix had been describing that as his situation in the court of Peleus; and his Διοτρεφες refers to it. But you must not translate that literally—

> Old daddy Phœnix, a God-send for us to maintain.

"Precious limbs," was at first an expression of great feeling, till vagabonds, draymen, &c., brought upon it the character of coarseness and ridicule.

It would run to great length, if I were to go through this one speech thus—this is enough for an example of my idea, and to prove the necessity of farther deviation; which still is departing from the author, and justifiable only by strong necessity, such as should not be admitted, till the sense of the original had been labored to the utmost and been found irreducible.

I will end this by giving you the strictest translation I can invent, leaving you the double task of bringing it closer, and of polishing it into the style of poetry.

Ah Phœnix, aged father, guest of Jove!
I relish no such honors; for my hope
Is to be honor'd by Jove's fated will,
Which keeps me close beside these sable ships,
Long as the breath shall in my bosom stay,
Or as my precious knees retain their spring.
Further I say—and cast it in your mind!—
Melt not my spirit down by weeping thus,
And wailing only for that great man's sake,
Atrides: neither ought you love that man;
Lest I should hate the friend I love so well.
With me united, 'tis your nobler part
To gall his spirit who has galled mine.
With me reign equal, half my honors share.
These will report; stay you here, and repose
On a soft bed; and with the beaming morn
Consult we, whether to go home or stay.
Iliad, Book ix.

I have thought that *hero* has contracted a different sense than it had in Homer's time, and is better rendered *great man*; but I am aware that the enclitics and other little words, falsely called expletives, are not introduced even so much as the genius of our language would admit. The euphony I leave entirely to you. Adieu!

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

My Lord,—We are of one mind as to the agreeable effect of rhyme, or euphony, in the lighter kinds of poetry. The pieces which your lordship mentions would certainly be spoiled by the loss of it, and so would all such. The "Alma" would lose all its neatness and smartness, and "Hudibras" all its humor. But in grave poems of extreme length, I apprehend that the case is different. Long before I thought of commencing poet myself, I have complained, and heard others complain, of the wearisomeness of such poems. Not that I suppose that tedium the effect of rhyme itself, but rather of the perpetual recurrence of the same pause and cadence, unavoidable in the English couplet. I hope, I may say truly, it was not in a spirit of presumption that I undertook to do what, in your lordship's opinion, neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared to do. On the contrary, I see not how I could have escaped that imputation, had I followed Pope in his own way. A closer translation was called for. I verily believed that rhyme had betrayed Pope into *his* deviations. For me, therefore, to have used his mode of versifying, would have been to expose myself to the same miscarriage, at the same time that I had not his talents to atone for it.

I agree with your lordship that a translation perfectly close is impossible, because time has sunk the original strict import of a thousand phrases, and we have no means of recovering it. But if we cannot be unimpeachably faithful, that is no reason why we should not be as faithful as we can; and if blank verse affords the fairest chance, then it claims the preference.

Your lordship, I will venture to say, can command me nothing in which I will not obey with the greatest alacrity.

Ει δυναμαι τελεσαι γε, και ει τετελεσμενον εστι.

But when, having made as close a translation as even you can invent, you enjoin me to make it still closer, and in rhyme too, I can only reply, as Horace to Agustus,

"——— cupidum, pater optime, vires
Deficiunt ——"

I have not treacherously departed from my pattern that I might seem to give some proof of the justness of my own opinion, but have fairly and honestly adhered as closely to it as I could. Yet your lordship will not have to compliment me on my success, either in respect of the poetical merit of my lines, or of their fidelity. They have just enough of each to make them deficient in the other.

Oh Phœnix, father, friend, guest sent from Jove,
Me no such honors as they yield can move,
For I expect my honors from above. [sense
Here Jove has fix'd me; and while breath and
Have place within me, I will never hence. [ears
Hear, too, and mark me well—haunt not mine
With sighs, nor seek to melt me with thy tears
For yonder chief, lest, urging such a plea
Through love of him, thou hateful prove to me.
Thy friendship for thy friend shall brighter shine
—Wounding his spirit, who has wounded mine.
Divide with me the honors of my throne—
These shall return, and make their tidings known,
But go not thou—thy couch shall here be dress'd
With softest fleeces for thy easy rest,
And with the earliest blush of op'ning day
We will consult to seek our home or stay.

Since I wrote these I have looked at Pope's. I am certainly somewhat closer to the original than he, but farther I say not. I shall wait with impatience for your lordship's conclusions from these premises, and remain, in the meantime, with great truth, my lord, &c.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

Dear Cowper,—I have received your letter on my journey through London, and as the chaise waits I shall be short. I did not mean it as a sign of any presumption that you have attempted what neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared; but merely as a proof of their addiction to rhyme; for I am clearly convinced that Homer may be better translated than into rhyme, and that you have succeeded in the places I have looked into. But I have fancied that it might have been still more literal, preserving the ease of genuine English and melody, and some degree of that elevation which Homer derives from simplicity. But I could not do it, or even near enough to form a judgment, or more than a fancy about it. Nor do I fancy it could be done "stans pede in uno." But when the mind has been fully impregnated with the original passage, often revolving it, and waiting for a happy moment, may still be necessary to the best trained mind. Adieu. THURLOW.

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

My Lord,—I haunt you with letters, but will trouble you now with a short line, only to tell your lordship how happy I am that any part of my work has pleased you. I have a comfortable consciousness that the whole has been executed with equal industry and attention; and am, my lord, with many thanks to you for snatching such a hasty moment to write to me, your lordship's obliged and affectionate humble servant. W. COWPER.

These letters cannot fail to be read with great interest.

Having in a former part of this work contrasted the two versions of Cowper and Pope, we shall now close the subject, by quoting Cowper's translation of some well-known and admired passages in the original poem. The classical reader will thus be enabled to determine how far the poet has succeeded in the application of his own principle, and retained the bold and lofty spirit of Homer, while he aims at transfusing his noble simplicity, and adhering strictly to his genuine meaning. We have selected the following specimens.

Hector extending his arms to caress his son Astyanax, in his interview with Andromache:

The hero ended, and his hands put forth
To reach his boy; but with a scream the child
Still closer to his nurse's bosom clung,
Shunning his touch; for dreadful in his eyes
The brazen armor shone, and dreadful more
The shaggy crest that swept his father's brow.
Both parents smil'd, delighted; and the chief
Set down the crested terror on the ground.
Then kiss'd him, play'd away his infant fears,
And thus to Jove, and all the Pow'rs above:
Grant, O ye gods! such eminent renown
And might in arms, as ye have giv'n to me,
To this my son, with strength to govern Troy.
From fight return'd be this his welcome home—
"He far excels his sire"—and may he rear
The crimson trophy to his mother's joy!*

He spake, and to his lovely spouse consign'd
The darling boy; with mingled smiles and tears
She wrapp'd him in her bosom's fragrant folds,
And Hector, pang'd with pity that she wept,
Her dewy cheek strok'd softly, and began.
Weep not for me, my love! no mortal arm
Shall send me prematurely to the shades,
Since, whether brave or dastard, at his birth
The fates ordain'd to each his hour to die.
Hence, then, to our abode; there weave or spin,
And task thy maidens. War to men belongs;
To all of Troy; and most of all to me.
Book vi. line 521.

The fatal conflict between Hector and Achilles:

So saying, his keen falchion from his side
He drew, well tempered, ponderous, and rush'd
At once to combat. As the eagle darts
Right downward through a sullen cloud to seize
Weak lamb or timorous hare, so he to fight
Impetuous sprang, and shook his glittering blade.
Achilles opposite, with fellest ire
Full-fraught came on; his shield with various art
Divine portray'd, o'erspread his ample chest;
And on his radiant casque terrific wav'd,
By Vulcan spun, his crest of bushy gold,
Bright as, among the stars, the star of all
Most splendid, Hesperus, at midnight moves;
So in the right hand of Achilles beam'd
His brandish'd spear, while, meditating woe
To Hector, he explor'd his noble form,
Seeking where he was vulnerable most.
But every part, his dazzling armor, torn
From brave Patroclus' body, well-secur'd,
Save where the circling key-bone from the neck
Disjoins the shoulder; there his throat appear'd,
Whence injur'd life with swiftest flight escapes.
Achilles, plunging in that part his spear,
Impell'd it through the yielding flesh beyond.
The ashen beam his pow'r of utt'rance left
Still unimpair'd, but in the dust he fell.

Hector's prayer to Achilles:

By thy own life, by theirs who gave thee birth,
And by thy knees, oh let not Grecian dogs
Rend and devour me, but in gold accept
And brass a ransom at my father's hands,
And, at thy mother's, an illustrious price;
Send home my body, grant me burial rites
Among the daughters and the sons of Troy.
Book xxii. line 351.

The indignant answer of Achilles to the prayer of Hector:

Dog! neither knees nor parents name to me.
I would my fierceness of revenge were such,
That I could carve and eat thee, to whose arms
Such griefs I owe; so true it is and sure,
That none shall save thy carcass from the dogs.
No. Would they bring ten ransoms by the scale,
Or twice ten ransoms, and still promise more;
Would Priam buy thee with thy weight in gold.

* For two other versions of this passage, see Letters, dated Dec. 17, 1793, and Jan. 5, 1794.

Not even then should she who bare thee weep
Upon thy bier; for dogs and rav'ning fowls
Shall rend thy flesh, till ev'ry bone be bare.

Hector's last dying words:

I knew thee; knew that I should sue in vain;
For in thy breast of steel no pity dwells.
But oh, be cautious now, lest Heav'n perchance
Requite thee on that day, when, pierc'd thyself
By Paris and Apollo, thou shalt fall,
Brave as thou art, within the Scæan gate.
He ceas'd, and death involved him dark around.
His spirit, from his lips dismiss'd, the house
Of Hades sought, deploring as she went
Youth's prime and vigor lost, disastrous doom!
But him, though dead, Achilles thus bespake:
Die thou. My death shall find me at what hour
Jove gives commandment, and the gods above.
Ibid. line 396.

The interview between Achilles and Priam, who comes to ransom the body of Hector:

. . . . . One I had,
One, more than all my sons the strength of Troy,
Whom standing for his country thou hast slain—
Hector—His body to redeem I come,
In Achaia's fleet, and bring, myself,
Ransom inestimable to thy tent.
O, fear the gods! and for remembrance' sake
Of thy own sire, Achilles! pity me,
More hapless still; who bear what, save myself,
None ever bore, thus lifting to my lips
Hands dyed so deep with slaughter of my sons.
So saying, he waken'd in his soul regret
Of his own sire; softly he plac'd his hand
On Priam's hand, and push'd him gently away.
Remembrance melted both. Stretch'd prone
Achilles' feet, the king his son bewail'd, [before
Wide-slaughtering Hector; and Achilles wept
By turns his father, and by turns his friend,
Patroclus; sounds of sorrow fill'd the tent.
Book xxiv. line 622.

Without entering upon any minute analysis of the above passages, we consider them as exhibiting a happy specimen of poetic talent; and that Cowper has been successful in exemplifying the rules and principles which, in his preface, he declares to be indispensable in a version of Homer.

It may be interesting to literary curiosity to be presented with a summary of facts, respecting Cowper's two versions of Homer.

This important undertaking commenced Nov. 21st, 1784, and was completed August 25th, 1790. During eight months of this intervening time, he was hindered by indisposition, so that he was occupied in the work, on the whole, five years and one month. On the 8th of September, 1790, his kinsman, the Rev. John Johnson, conveyed the translation to Johnson, the bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, with a view to its consignment to the press. During this period Cowper gave the work a second revisal, which he concluded March 4th, 1791. On July 1st of the same year the publication issued from the press. In 1793 there was a further revision, with the addition of explanatory notes, a second edition having been called for. In 1796 he engaged in a revisal of the whole work, which, owing to his state of mind and declining health, was not finished till March 8th, 1799. In January, 1800, he newmodelled a passage in his translation of the Iliad, where mention is made of the very ancient sculpture, in which Dædalus had represented the Cretan dance for Ariadne. This proved to be the last effort of his pen.*

We have thought it due to Cowper's version to enter thus largely into an examination of its merits, from a persuasion that an undertaking of this magnitude, executed by the author of "The Task," claims to be considered as a part of our national literature. It remains only to be observed that the foreigner whom he mentions with so much estimation, as having aided him with his critical taste and erudition, was Fuseli the painter. He gratefully acknowledges his obligations in the following letters to Johnson the bookseller.

Weston, Feb. 11, 1790.

Dear Sir,—I am very sensibly obliged by the remarks of Mr. Fuseli, and beg that you will tell him so; they afford me opportunities of improvement which I shall not neglect. When he shall see the press-copy, he will be convinced of this, and will be convinced likewise, that, smart as he sometimes is, he spares me often, when I have no mercy on myself. He will see almost a new translation. . . . I assure you faithfully, that whatever my faults may be, to be easily or hastily satisfied with what I have written is not one of them.

Sept. 7, 1790.

It grieves me that, after all, I am obliged to go into public without the whole advantage of Mr. Fuseli's judicious strictures. The only consolation is, that I have not forfeited them by my own impatience. Five years are no small portion of a man's life, especially at the latter end of it, and in those five years, being a man of almost no engagements, I have done more in the way of hard work, than most could have done in twice the number. I beg you to present my compliments to Mr. Fuseli, with many and sincere thanks for the services that his own more important occupations would allow him to render me.

We add one more letter in this place, addressed to his bookseller, to show with what becoming resolution he could defend his poetical opinions when he considered them to be just.

Some accidental reviser of the manuscript had taken the liberty to alter a line in a poem

* See Dr. Johnson's sketch of the Life of Cowper.

of Cowper's:—this liberty drew from the offended poet the following very just and animated remonstrance, which we are anxious to preserve, because it elucidates with great felicity of expression his deliberate ideas on English versification.

"I did not write the line that has been tampered with, hastily, or without due attention to the construction of it; and what appeared to me its only merit is, in its present state, entirely annihilated.

"I know that ears of modern verse-writers are delicate to an excess, and their readers are troubled with the same squeamishness as themselves. So that if a line do not run as smooth as quicksilver, they are offended. A critic of the present day serves a poem as a cook serves a dead turkey, when she fastens the legs of it to a post, and draws out all the sinews. For this we may thank Pope: but unless we could imitate him in the closeness and compactness of his expression, as well as in the smoothness of his numbers, we had better drop the imitation, which serves no other purpose than to emasculate and weaken all we write. Give me a manly rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods, that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them!

"I have said thus much, as I hinted in the beginning, because I have just finished a much longer poem than the last, which our common friend will receive by the same messenger that has the charge of this letter. In that poem there are many lines which an ear so nice as the gentleman's who made the above-mentioned alteration would undoubtedly condemn, and yet (if I may be permitted to say it) they cannot be made smoother without being the worse for it. There is a roughness on a plum, which nobody that understands fruit would rub off, though the plum would be much more polished without it. But, lest I tire you, I will only add, that I wish you to guard me from all such meddling, assuring you, that I always write as smoothly as I can, but that I never did, never will, sacrifice the spirit or sense of a passage to the sound of it."

Cowper was much affected at this time by a severe indisposition, to which he alludes in the following letter.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston Underwood, April 27, 1792.

Dear Sir,—I write now merely to prevent any suspicion in your mind that I neglect you. I have been very ill, and for more than a fortnight unable to use the pen, or you should have heard long ere now of the safe arrival of your packet. I have revised the Elegy on Seduction,* but have not as yet been able to proceed farther. The best way of returning these which I have now in hand, will be to return them with those which you propose to send hereafter. I will make no more apologies for any liberties that it may seem necessary to me to take with your copies. Why do you send them, but that I may exercise that freedom, of which the very act of sending them implies your permission? I will only say, therefore, that you must neither be impatient nor even allow yourself to think me tardy, since assuredly I will not be more so than I needs must be. My hands are pretty full. Milton must be forwarded, and is at present hardly begun; and I have beside a numerous correspondence, which engrosses more of my time than I can at present well afford to it. I cannot decide with myself whether the lines in which the reviewers are so smartly noticed had better be expunged or not. These lines are gracefully introduced and well written; for which reasons I should be loath to part with them. On the other hand, how far it may be prudent to irritate a body of critics, who certainly much influence the public opinion, may deserve consideration. It may be added too, that they are not equally worthy of the lash: there are among them men of real learning, judgment, and candor. I must leave it, therefore, to your own determination.

I thank you for Thomson's Epitaph, on which I have only to remark (and I am sure that I do it not in a captious spirit) that, since the poet is himself the speaker, I cannot but question a little the propriety of the quotation subjoined. It is a prayer, and when the man is buried, the time of prayer is over. I know it may be answered, that it is placed there merely for the benefit of the reader; but all readers of tombstones are not wise enough to be trusted for such an interpretation.

I was well pleased with your poem on * * and equally well pleased with your intention not to publish it. It proves two points of consequence to an author:—both that you have an exuberant fancy, and discretion enough to know how to deal with it. The man is as formidable for his ludicrous talent, as he has made himself contemptible by his use of it. To despise him therefore is natural, but it is wise to do it in secret.

Since the juvenile poems of Milton were edited by Warton, you need not trouble yourself to send them. I have them of his edition already.

I am, dear sir,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

The marriage of Miss Stapleton, the Cath-

* This Elegy is inserted in Mr. Park's volume of sonnets and miscellaneous poems.

arina of Cowper, to Sir John Throckmorton's brother, (now Mr. Courtenay,) was one of those events which the muse of Cowper had ventured to anticipate; and he had now the happiness of finding his cherished wish amply fulfilled, and of thereby securing them as neighbors at the Hall.*

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, May 20, 1792.

My dearest Coz,—I rejoice as thou reasonably supposest me to do, in the matrimonial news communicated in your last. Not that it was altogether news to me, for twice I had received broad hints of it from Lady Frog, by letter, and several times *vivâ voce* while she was here. But she enjoined *me* secrecy as well as *you*, and you know that all secrets are safe with me; safer far than the winds in the bags of Æolus. I know not, in fact, the lady whom it would give me more pleasure to call Mrs. Courtenay, than the lady in question; partly because I know her, but especially because I know her to be all that I can wish in a neighbor.

I have often observed, that there is a regular alternation of good and evil in the lot of men, so that a favorable incident may be considered as the harbinger of an unfavorable one, and *vice versâ*. Dr. Madan's experience witnesses to the truth of this observation. One day he gets a broken head, and the next a mitre to heal it. I rejoice that he has met with so effectual a cure, though my joy is not unmingled with concern; for till now I had some hopes of seeing him, but since I live in the north, and his episcopal call is in the west, that is a gratification, I suppose, which I must no longer look for.

My sonnet, which I sent you, was printed in the Northampton paper, last week, and this week it produced me a complimentary one in the same paper, which served to convince me, at least by the matter of it, that my own was not published without occasion, and that it had answered its purpose.†

* This wish is expressed in the following lines:—

"With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home.
And with scenes that new rapture inspire.
As oft as it suits her to roam;
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear.
And ours would be pleasant as hers.
Might we view her enjoying it here."

See *Verses addressed to Miss Stapleton*, p. 343.

† We have succeeded in obtaining these verses, and think them worthy of insertion:

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

ON READING HIS SONNET OF THE SIXTEENTH INSTANT ADDRESSED TO MR. WILBERFORCE.

Desert the cause of liberty!—the cause
Of human nature!—sacred flame that burn'd
So late, so bright within thee!—thence descend
The monster Slavery's unnatural friend!
'Twere vile aspersion! justly, while it draws
Thy virtuous indignation, greatly spurn'd.

My correspondence with Hayley proceeds briskly, and is very affectionate on both sides. I expect him here in about a fortnight, and wish heartily, with Mrs. Unwin, that you would give him a meeting. I have promised him, indeed, that he shall find us alone, but you are one of the family.

I wish much to print the following lines in one of the daily papers. Lord S.'s vindication of the poor culprit* in the affair of Cheit Sing, has confirmed me in the belief that he has been injuriously treated, and I think it an act merely of justice to take a little notice of him.

TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

BY AN OLD SCHOOL-FELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

Hastings! I knew thee young, and of a mind
While young, humane, conversable, and kind:
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle THEN,
Now grown a villain, and the WORST of men:
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the BEST.

If thou wilt take the pains to send them to thy news-monger, I hope thou wilt do well.

Adieu! W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, May, 20, 1792.

My dearest of all Johnnies,—I am not sorry that your ordination is postponed. A year's learning and wisdom, added to your present stock, will not be more than enough to satisfy the demands of your function. Neither am I sorry that you find it difficult to fix your thoughts to the serious point at all times. It proves, at least, that you attempt, and wish to do it, and these are good symptoms. Woe to those who enter on the ministry of the gospel without having previously asked, at least from God, a mind and spirit suited to their occupation, and whose experience never differs from itself, because they are always alike vain, light, and inconsiderate. It is, therefore, matter of great joy to me to hear you complain of levity, and such it is to Mrs. Unwin. She is, I thank God, tolerably well, and loves you. As to the time of your journey hither, the sooner after June the better; till then we shall have company.

As soon the foes of Afric might expect
The altar's blaze, forgetful of the law
Of its aspiring nature, should direct
To hell its point inverted; as to draw
Virtue like thine, and genius, grovelling base,
To sanction wrong, and dignify disgrace.

Welcome *detection!* grateful to the *Cause*,
As to its Patron, Cowper's just applause!

S. M'CLELLAN.

April 25, 1792.

* Warren Hastings, at that time under impeachment, as Governor-general of India.

I forget not my debts to your dear sister, and your aunt Balls. Greet them both with a brother's kiss, and place it to my account. I will write to them when Milton, and a thousand other engagements will give me leave. Mr. Hayley is here on a visit. We have formed a friendship that I trust will last for life, and render us an edifying example to all future poets.

Adieu! Lose no time in coming after the time mentioned. W. C.

The reader is informed, by the close of the last letter, that Hayley was at this time the guest of Cowper. The meeting, so singularly produced, was a source of reciprocal delight; and each looked cheerfully forward to the unclouded enjoyment of many social and literary hours.

Hayley's account of this visit is too interesting not to be recorded in his own words.

"My host, though now in his sixty-first year, appeared as happily exempt from all the infirmities of advanced life, as friendship could wish him to be; and his more elderly companion, not materially oppressed by age, discovered a benevolent alertness of character that seemed to promise a continuance of their domestic comfort. Their reception of me was kindness itself:—I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resembled his poetry, charming by unaffected elegance, and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady, who, having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance through many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health and the renown of the poet, whom she had the happiness to preserve.

"It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching and a more satisfactory point of view. Their tender attention to each other, their simple, devout gratitude for the mercies which they had experienced together, and their constant, but unaffected propensity to impress on the mind and heart of a new friend, the deep sense which they incessantly felt, of their mutual obligations to each other, afforded me a very singular gratification; which my reader will conceive the more forcibly, when he has perused the following exquisite sonnet, addressed by Cowper to Mrs. Unwin.

"SONNET.

"Mary! I want a lyre with other strings:
Such aid from Heaven, as some have feign'd they drew!
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new,
And undebas'd by praise of meaner things!
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings
I may record thy worth, with honor due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,—
Verse that immortalizes whom it sings!
But thou hast little need: There is a book,
By seraphs writ, with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look;
A chronicle of actions, just and bright!
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

"The delight that I derived from a perfect view of the virtues, the talents, and the present domestic enjoyments of Cowper, was suddenly overcast by the darkest and most painful anxiety.

"After passing our mornings in social study, we usually walked out together at noon. In returning from one of our rambles around the pleasant village of Weston, we were met by Mr. Greatheed, an accomplished minister of the gospel, who resides at Newport-Pagnel, and whom Cowper described to me in terms of cordial esteem.

"He came forth to meet us as we drew near the house, and it was soon visible, from his countenance and manner, that he had ill news to impart. After the most tender preparation that humanity could devise, he acquainted Cowper that Mrs. Unwin was under the immediate pressure of a paralytic attack.

"My agitated friend rushed to the sight of the sufferer:—he returned to me in a state that alarmed me in the highest degree for his faculties:—his first speech to me was wild in the extreme;—my answer would appear little less so; but it was addressed to the predominant fancy of my unhappy friend, and, with the blessing of Heaven, it produced an instantaneous calm in his troubled mind.

"From that moment he rested on my friendship, with such mild and cheerful confidence, that his affectionate spirit regarded me as sent providentially to support him in a season of the severest affliction."

The kindness of Hayley, at this critical moment, reflects the highest credit on his humanity and presence of mind. By means of an electrical machine, which the village of Weston fortunately supplied, he succeeded in relieving his suffering patient with the happiest effect. With this seasonable aid, seconded by a course of medicine recommended by Dr. Austen, an eminent London physician, and a friend of Hayley's, the violence of the attack was gradually mitigated, and the agitated mind of Cowper greatly relieved.

The progress of her recovery, and its influence on the tender spirit of Cowper, will sufficiently appear in the following letters

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, May 24, 1792.

I wish with all my heart, my dearest Coz.,

that I had not ill news for the subject of the present letter. My friend, my Mary, has again been attacked by the same disorder that threatened me last year with the loss of her, and of which you were yourself a witness. Gregson would not allow that first stroke to be paralytic, but this he acknowledges to be so; and with respect to the former, I never had myself any doubt that it was, but this has been much the severest. Her speech has been almost unintelligible from the moment that she was struck; it is with difficulty that she opens her eyes, and she cannot keep them open; the muscles necessary to the purpose being contracted; and as to self-moving powers, from place to place, and the use of her right hand and arm, she has entirely lost them.

It has happened well, that of all men living, the man most qualified to assist and comfort me is here: though till within these few days I never saw him, and a few weeks since had no expectation that I ever should. You have already guessed that I mean Hayley—Hayley, who loves me as if he had known me from my cradle. When he returns to town, as he must, alas! too soon, he will pay his respects to you.

I will not conclude without adding, that our poor patient is beginning, I hope, to recover from this stroke also; but her amendment is slow, as must be expected at her time of life and in such a disorder. I am as well myself as you have ever known me in a time of much trouble, and even better.

It was not possible to prevail on Mrs. Unwin to let me send for Dr. Kerr, but Hayley has written to his friend, Dr. Austen, a representation of her case, and we expect his opinion and advice to-morrow. In the meantime, we have borrowed an electrical machine from our neighbor Socket, the effect of which she tried yesterday and the day before, and we think it has been of material service.

She was seized while Hayley and I were walking, and Mr. Greatheed, who called while we were absent, was with her.

I forgot in my last to thank thee for the proposed amendments of thy friend. Whoever he is, make my compliments to him, and thank him. The passages to which he objects have been all altered, and when he shall see them new dressed, I hope he will like them better.* W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 26, 1792.

My dearest Cousin,—Knowing that you will be anxious to learn how we go on, I write a few lines to inform you that Mrs. Unwin daily recovers a little strength and a little power of utterance; but she seems strongest, and her speech is more distinct, in a morning. Hayley has been all in all to us on this very afflictive occasion. Love him, I charge you, dearly, for my sake. Where could I have found a man, except himself, who could have made himself so necessary to me in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him.

Adieu, my dear sweet coz. Mrs. Unwin, as plainly as her poor lips can speak, sends her best love, and Hayley threatens in a few days to lay close siege to your affections in person. W. C.

There is some hope, I find, that the chancellor may continue in office, and I shall be glad if he does, because we have no single man worthy to succeed him.

I open my letter again to thank you, my dearest coz., for yours just received. Though happy, as you well know, to see *you* at all times, we have no need, and I trust shall have none, to trouble you with a journey made on purpose; yet once again, I am willing and desirous to believe, we shall be a happy trio at Weston: but unless necessity dictates a journey of charity, I wish all yours hither to be made for pleasure. Farewell! thou shalt know how we go on.

The tender and grateful mind of Cowper, sensible of the kind and able services of Dr. Austen, led him to pour out the effusions of his heart in the following verses.

TO DR. AUSTEN,

OF CECIL STREET, LONDON.

Austen! accept a grateful verse from me!
The poet's treasure! no inglorious fee!
Loved by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in a verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,
Immortalizing names which else had died:
And, oh! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health:
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,—
I would not recompense his art with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.

Friend of my friend, I love thee, though unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

Weston, June 4, 1792.

My dearest Rose,—I am not such an ungrateful and insensible animal, as to have neglected you thus long without a reason. . .

* This friend was Mrs. Carter.

I cannot say that I am sorry that our dear Johnny finds the pulpit-door shut against him at present.* He is young, and can afford to wait another year; neither is it to be regretted that his time of preparation for an office of so much importance as that of a minister of God's word should have been a little protracted. It is easier to direct the movements of a great army than to guide a few souls to heaven; the way is narrow and full of snares, and the guide himself has the most difficulties to encounter. But I trust he will do well. He is single in his views, honest-hearted, and desirous, by prayer and study of the scripture, to qualify himself for the service of his great Master, who will suffer no such man to fail for want of his aid and protection. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 4, 1792.

ALL'S WELL.

Which words I place as conspicuously as possible, and prefix them to my letter, to save you the pain, my friend and brother, of a moment's anxious speculation. Poor Mary proceeds in her amendment still, and improves, I think, even at a swifter rate than when you left her. The stronger she grows the faster she gathers strength, which is perhaps the natural course of recovery. She walked so well this morning, that she told me at my first visit she had entirely forgot her illness, and she spoke so distinctly, and had so much of her usual countenance, that had it been possible she would have made me forget it too.

Returned from my walk, blown to tatters —found two dear things in the study, your letter and my Mary! She is bravely well, and your beloved epistle does us both good. I found your kind pencil-note in my song-book as soon as I came down on the morning of your departure, and Mary was vexed to the heart that the simpletons who watched her supposed her asleep when she was not, for she learned, soon after you were gone, that you would have peeped at her, had you known her to have been awake: I perhaps might have had a peep too, and was as vexed as she: but if it please God, we shall make ourselves large amends for all lost peeps by-and-by at Eartham. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 5, 1792.

Yesterday was a noble day with us—speech almost perfect—eyes open almost the whole day, without any effort to keep them so; and the step wonderfully improved. But the night has been almost a sleepless one, owing partly I believe to her having had as much sleep again as usual the night before; for even when she is in tolerable health she hardly ever sleeps well two nights together. I found her accordingly a little out of spirits this morning, but still insisting on it that she is better. Indeed she always tells me so, and will probably die with those very words upon her lips. They will be true then at least, for then she will be best of all. She is now (the clock has just struck eleven) endeavoring, I believe, to get a little sleep, for which reason I do not yet let her know that I have received your letter.

Can I ever honor you enough for your zeal to serve me? Truly I think not: I am however so sensible of the love I owe you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have in short a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here, and, though I believe that if any man living can do me good you will, I cannot yet persuade myself, that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter; you are yourself a good, which I can never value enough, and, whether rich or poor in other respects, I shall always account myself better provided for than I deserve, with such a friend at my back as you. Let it please God to continue to me my William and Mary, and I will be more reasonable than to grumble.

I rose this morning wrapt round with a cloud of melancholy, and with a heart full of fears, but if I see Mary's amendment a little advanced when she rises, I shall be better.

I have just been with her again. Except that she is fatigued for want of sleep, she seems as well as yesterday. The post brings me a letter from Hurdis, who is broken-hearted for a dying sister. Had we eyes sharp enough, we should see the arrows of death flying in all directions, and account it a wonder that we and our friends escape them but a single day. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 7, 1792.

Of what materials can you suppose me made, if after all the rapid proofs that you have given me of your friendship, I do not love you with all my heart, and regret your absence continually? But you must permit me to be melancholy now and then; or if you will not, I must be so without your permission, for that sable thread is so intermixed with the very thread of my existence as to be inseparable from it, at least while I exist in the body. Be content, therefore; let me sigh and

* Some unexpected difficulties had occurred in obtaining a curacy, with a title for orders.

groan, but always be sure that I love you! You will be well assured that I should not have indulged myself in this rhapsody about myself and my melancholy, had my present mood been of that complexion, or had not our poor Mary seemed still to advance in her recovery. So in fact she does, and has performed several little feats to-day; such as either she could not perform at all, or very feebly, while you were with us.

I shall be glad if you have seen Johnny as I call him, my Norfolk cousin; he is a sweet lad, but as shy as a bird. It costs him always two or three days to open his mouth before a stranger; but when he does, he is sure to please by the innocent cheerfulness of his conversation. His sister too is one of my idols, for the resemblance she bears to my mother.

Mary and you have all my thoughts; and how should it be otherwise? She looks well, is better, and loves you dearly.

Adieu! my dear brother. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 10, 1792.

I do indeed anxiously wish that everything you do may prosper; and should I at last prosper by your means, shall taste double sweetness in prosperity for that reason.

I rose this morning, as I usually do, with a mind all in sables. In this mood I presented myself to Mary's bedside, whom I found, though after many hours lying awake, yet cheerful, and not to be affected with my desponding humor. It is a great blessing to us both, that, poor feeble thing as she is, she has a most invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness, that nothing shakes. She is now in the study, and is certainly in some degree better than she was yesterday, but how to measure that little I know not, except by saying that it is just perceptible.

I am glad that you have seen my Johnny of Norfolk, because I know it will be a comfort to you to have seen your successor. He arrived to my great joy, yesterday; and, not having bound himself to any particular time of going, will, I hope, stay long with us. You are now once more snug in your retreat, and I give you joy of your return to it, after the bustle in which you have lived since you left Weston. Weston mourns your absence, and will mourn it till she sees you again. What is to become of Milton I know not; I do nothing but scribble to you, and seem to have no relish for any other employment. I have however, in pursuit of your idea to compliment Darwin, put a few stanzas together, which I shall subjoin; you will easily give them all that you find they want, and match the song with another.

I am now going to walk with Johnny, much cheered since I began writing to you, and by Mary's looks and good spirits. W. C.

TO DR. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN.

Two poets (poets by report
Not oft so well agree)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honor thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth,
By labors of their own.

We, therefore, pleas'd, extol thy song,
Though various, yet complete,
Rich in embellishment as strong,
And learn'd as it is sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;
Though, could our hearts repine,
At any poet's happier lays,
They would, they must, at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundic'd eye:

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.*

* The celebrated poem of "the Botanic Garden," originated in a copy of verses, addressed by Miss Seward to Dr. Darwin, complimenting him on his sequestered retreat near Lichfield. In this retreat there was a mossy fountain of the purest water; aquatic plants bordered its summit, and branched from the fissures of the rock. There was also a brook, which he widened into small lakes. The whole scene formed a little paradise, and was embellished with various classes of plants, uniting the Linnean science, with all the charm of landscape.

When Miss Seward presented her verses to Dr. Darwin, he was highly gratified, she observes, and said, "I shall send this poem to the periodical publications; but it ought to form the exordium of a great work. The Linnean system is unexplored poetic ground, and a happy subject for the muse. It affords fine scope for poetic landscape; it suggests metamorphoses of the Ovidian kind, though reversed. Ovid made men and women into flowers, plants, and trees. You should make flowers, plants, and trees, into men and women. I," continued he, "will write the notes, which must be scientific, and you shall write the verse."

Miss S. remarked, that besides her want of botanic knowledge, the undertaking was not strictly proper for a female pen; and that she felt how much more it was adapted to the ingenuity and vigor of his own fancy. After many objections urged on the part of Dr. Darwin, he at length acquiesced, and ultimately produced his "Loves of the Plants, or Botanic Garden."*

Though this poem obtained much celebrity on its first appearance, it was nevertheless severely animadverted upon by some critics. A writer in the Anti-Jacobin Review, (known to be the late Mr. Canning) parodied the work, by producing "The Loves of the Triangles," in which triangles were made to fall in love with the same fervor of passion, as Dr. Darwin attributed to plants. The style, the imagery, and the entire composition of "The Loves of the Plants," were most successfully imitated. We quote the following.

"In filmy, gauzy, gossamery lines,
With lucid language, and most dark designs,
In sweet tetrandryan monogynian strains,
Pant for a pistil in botanic pains;
Raise lust in pinks, and with unhallowed fire,
Bid the soft virgin violet expire."

We do not think that the Botanic Garden ever fully

* See Life of Dr. Darwin, by Miss Seward.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, June 11, 1792.

My dearest Coz.,—Thou art ever in my thoughts, whether I am writing to thee or not, and my correspondence seems to grow upon me at such a rate that I am not able to address thee as often as I would. In fact, I live only to write letters. Hayley is as you see added to the number, and to him I write almost as duly as I rise in the morning; nor is he only added, but his friend Carwardine also—Carwardine the generous, the disinterested, the friendly. I seem, in short, to have stumbled suddenly on a race of heroes, men who resolve to have no interests of their own till mine are served.

But I will proceed to other matters, and that concern me more intimately, and more immediately, than all that can be done for me either by the great or the small, or by both united. Since I wrote last, Mrs. Unwin has been continually improving in strength, but at so gradual a rate that I can only mark it by saying that she moves about every day with less support than the former. Her recovery is most of all retarded by want of sleep. On the whole, I believe she goes on as well as could be expected, though not quite well enough to satisfy me. And Dr. Austen, speaking from the reports I have made of her, says he has no doubt of her restoration.

During the last two months I seem to myself to have been in a dream. It has been a most eventful period, and fruitful to an uncommon degree, both in good and evil. I have been very ill, and suffered excruciating pain. I recovered, and became quite well again. I received within my doors a man, but lately an entire stranger, and who now loves me as a brother, and forgets himself to serve me. Mrs. Unwin has been seized with an illness that for many days threatened to deprive me of her, and to cast a gloom, an impenetrable one, on all my future prospects. She is now granted to me again. A few days since I should have thought the moon might have descended into my purse as likely as any emolument, and now it seems not impossible. All this has come to pass with such rapidity as events move with in romance indeed, but not often in real life. Events of all sorts creep or fly exactly as God pleases.

To the foregoing I have to add in conclusion, the arrival of my Johnny, just when I wanted him most, and when only a few days before I had no expectation of him. He came to dinner on Saturday, and I hope I shall keep him long. What comes next I know not, but shall endeavor, as you exhort me, to look for good, and I know I shall have your prayer that I may not be disappointed.

maintained its former estimation, after the keen Attic wit of Mr. Canning, though the concluding lines of Cowper seem to promise perpetuity to its fame.

Hayley tells me you begin to be jealous of him, lest I should love him more than I love you, and bids me say, "that, should I do so, you in revenge must love him more than I do." Him I know you will love, and me, because you have such a habit of doing it that you cannot help it.

Adieu! My knuckles ache with letter-writing. With my poor patient's affectionate remembrances, and Johnny's.

I am ever thine, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 19, 1792.

..... Thus have I filled a whole page to my dear William of Eartham, and have not said a syllable yet about my Mary. A sure sign that she goes on well. Be it known to you that we have these four days discarded our sedan with two elbows. Here is no more carrying, or being carried, but she walks up stairs boldly, with one hand upon the balustrade, and the other under my arm, and in like manner she comes down in a morning. Still I confess she is feeble, and misses much of her former strength. The weather too is sadly against her: it deprives her of many a good turn in the orchard, and fifty times have I wished, this very day, that Dr. Darwin's scheme of giving rudders and sails* to the ice

* That a very perceptible change, generally speaking, has taken place in the climate of Great Britain, and that the same observation applies to other countries, has been a frequent subject of remark, both with the past and present generation. Various causes have been assigned for this peculiarity. It has been said that nature is growing old, and losing its elasticity and vigor. Others have attributed the change to the vast accumulation of ice in the Polar regions, and its consequent influence on the temperature of the air. Dr. Darwin humorously suggested the scheme of giving rudders and sails to the Ice Islands, that they might be wafted by northern gales, and thus be absorbed by the heat of a southern latitude. It is worthy of remark that in Milton's Latin Poems, there is a college thesis on this subject, viz., whether nature was becoming old and infirm. Milton took the negative of this proposition, and maintained, *naturam non pati senium*, that nature was not growing old. Cowper, in his translation of this poem, thus renders some of the passages.

How?—Shall the face of nature then be plough'd
Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
On the great Parent fix a sterile curse?
Shall even she confess old age, and halt,
And, palsy-smitten, shake her starry brows?—
Shall Time's unsated maw crave and ingulph
The very heav'ns, that regulate his flight?—
No. The Almighty Father surer had
His deep foundations, and providing well
For the event of all, the scales of Fate
Suspended, in just equipoise, and bade
His universal works, from age to age,
One tenor hold, perpetual, undisturb'd.—
Not lardier now is Saturn than of old,
Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
Phœbus, his vigor unimpair'd, still shows
Th' effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
A downward course, that he may warm the vales;
But, ever rich in influence, runs his road,
Sign after sign, through all the heavenly zone.
Beautiful as at first, ascends the star
From odorif'rous Ind, whose office is
To gather home betimes th' ethereal flock,
To pour them o'er the skies again at eve,
And to discriminate the night and day.

islands that spoil all our summers, were actually put into practice. So should we have gentle airs instead of churlish blasts, and those everlasting sources of bad weather being once navigated into the southern hemisphere, my Mary would recover as fast again. We are both of your mind respecting the journey to Eartham, and think that July, if by that time she have strength for the journey, will be better than August. We shall have more long days before us, and them we shall want as much for our return as for our going forth. This however, must be left to the Giver of all good. If our visit to you be according to his will, he will smooth our way before us, and appoint the time of it; and I thus speak, not because I wish to seem a saint in your eyes, but because my poor Mary actually is one, and would not set her foot over the threshold, unless she had, or thought she had, God's free permission. With that she would go through floods and fire, though without it she would be afraid of everything—afraid even to visit you, dearly as she loves, and much as she longs to see you. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 27, 1792.

Well then—let us talk about this journey to Eartham. You wish me to settle the time of it, and I wish with all my heart to be able to do so, living in hopes meanwhile that I shall be able to do it soon. But some little time must necessarily intervene. Our Mary must be able to walk alone, to cut her own food, feed herself, and to wear her own shoes, for at present she wears mine. All things considered, my friend and brother, you will see the expediency of waiting a little before we set off to Eartham. We mean indeed before that day arrives to make a trial of the strength of her head, how far it may be able to bear the motion of a carriage—a motion that it has not felt these seven years. I grieve that we are thus circumstanced, and that we cannot gratify ourselves in a delightful and innocent project without all these precautions; but when we have leaf-gold to handle we must do it tenderly.

I thank you, my brother, both for presenting my authorship* to your friend Guy, and for the excellent verses with which you have inscribed your present. There are none neater or better turned—with what shall I requite you? I have nothing to send you but a gim-crack, which I have prepared for my bride and bridegroom neighbors, who are expected to-morrow! You saw in my book a poem entitled Catharina, which concluded with a wish that we had her for a neighbor:* this therefore is called

CATHARINA:

(*The Second Part.*)

ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE COUTENAY, ESQ.

Believe it or not, as you choose,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.

I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And lo! she is actually come.

And such prophecy some may despise,
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approv'd in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.

'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth,
From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth,
Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all;
But less to our grief could we view
Catharina the queen of the Hall.

And therefore I wish'd as I did,
And therefore this union of hands,
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry amen to the bands.

Since therefore I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for her,
I will e'en to my wishes again.

With one I have made her wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life,
How soon I can make her a mother.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 4, 1792.

I know not how you proceed in your life of Milton, but I suppose not very rapidly, for while you were here, and since you left us, you have had no other theme but me. As for myself, except my letters to you, and the nuptial song I inserted in my last, I have literally done nothing since I saw you. Nothing, I mean, in the writing way, though a great deal in another; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavoring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well,

Still Cynthia's changeful horn waxes and wanes
Alternate, and with arms extended still,
She welcomes to her breast her brother's beams.
Nor have the elements deserted yet
Their functions.—
Thus, in unbroken series, all proceeds;
And shall, till, wide involving either pole
And the immensity of yonder heav'n,
The final flames of destiny absorb
The world, consum'd in one enormous pyre!

* Verses on Dr. Darwin.

* See p. 362.

and had rather carry this point completely than be the most famous editor of Milton that the world has ever seen or shall see.

Your humorous descant upon my art of wishing made us merry, and consequently did good to us both. I sent my wish to the Hall yesterday. They are excellent neighbors, and so friendly to me that I wished to gratify them. When I went to pay my first visit, George flew into the court to meet me, and when I entered the parlor Catharina sprang into my arms.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 15, 1792.

The progress of the old nurse in Terence is very much like the progress of my poor patient in the road of recovery. I cannot, indeed, say that she moves but advances not, for advances are certainly made, but the progress of a week is hardly perceptible. I know not therefore, at present, what to say about this long-postponed journey. The utmost that it is safe for me to say at this moment is this—You know that you are dear to us both: true it is that you are so, and equally true that the very instant we feel ourselves at liberty, we will fly to Eartham. I have been but once within the Hall door since the Courtenays came home, much as I have been pressed to dine there, and have hardly escaped giving a little offence by declining it: but, though I should offend all the world by my obstinacy in this instance, I would not leave my poor Mary alone. Johnny serves me as a representative, and him I send without scruple. As to the affair of Milton, I know not what will become of it. I wrote to Johnson a week since to tell him that, the interruption of Mrs. Unwin's illness still continuing, and being likely to continue, I knew not when I should be able to proceed. The translations (I said) were finished, except the revisal of a part.

God bless your dear little boy and poet! I thank him for exercising his dawning genius upon me, and shall be still happier to thank him in person.

Abbot is painting me so true,
That (trust me) you would stare
And hardly know, at the first view,
If I were here or there.*

I have sat twice; and the few who have seen his copy of me are much struck with the resemblance. He is a sober, quiet man, which, considering that I must have him at least a week longer for an inmate, is a great comfort to me.

My Mary sends you her best love. She can walk now, leaning on my arm only, and her speech is certainly much improved. I long to see you. Why cannot you and dear Tom spend the remainder of the summer with us? We might then all set off for Eartham merrily together. But I retract this, conscious that I am unreasonable. It is a wretched world, and what we would is almost always what we cannot.

Adieu! Love me, and be sure of a return.

W. C.

* This portrait was taken at the instance of Dr. Johnson, and is thought most to resemble Cowper. It is now in the possession of Dr. Johnson's family, and represents the poet in a sitting posture, in an evening dress.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, July 20, 1792.

Dear Sir,—I have been long silent, and must now be short. My time since I wrote last has been almost wholly occupied in suffering. Either indisposition of my own, or of the dearest friend I have,* has so entirely engaged my attention, that, except the revision of the two elegies you sent me long since, I have done nothing; nor do I at present foresee the day when I shall be able to do anything. Should Mrs. Unwin recover sufficiently to undertake a journey, I have promised Mr. Hayley to close the summer with a visit to him at Eartham. At the best, therefore, I cannot expect to proceed in my main business, till the approach of winter. I am thus thrown so much into arrear respecting Milton, that I already despair of being ready at the time appointed, and so I have told my employer.

I need not say that the drift of this melancholy preface is to apprize you that you must not expect despatch from me. Such expedition as I can use I will, but I believe you must be very patient.

It was only one year that I gave to drawing, for I found it an employment hurtful to my eyes, which have always been weak, and subject to inflammation. I finished my attempt in this way with three small landscapes, which I presented to a lady. These may, perhaps, exist, but I have now no correspondence with the fair proprietor. Except these, there is nothing remaining to show that I ever aspired to such an accomplishment.

The hymns in the Olney collection marked (C) are all of my composition, except one, which bears that initial by a mistake of the printer. Not having the book at hand, I cannot now say which it is.

Wishing you a pleasant time at Margate, and assuring you, that I shall receive, with great pleasure, any drawing of yours with

* Mrs. Unwin.

which you may favor me, and give it a distinguished place in my very small collection,

I remain, dear sir,

Much and sincerely yours, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 22, 1792.

This important affair, my dear brother, is at last decided, and we are coming. Wednesday se'nnight, if nothing occur to make a later day necessary, is the day fixed for our journey. Our rate of travelling must depend on Mary's ability to bear it. Our mode of travelling will occupy three days unavoidably, for we shall come in a coach. Abbot finishes my picture to-morrow; on Wednesday he returns to town, and is commissioned to order one down for us, with four steeds to draw it;

"Hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
That cannot go but forty miles a day."

Send us our route, for I am as ignorant of it almost as if I were in a strange country. We shall reach St. Alban's, I suppose, the first day; say where we must finish our second day's journey, and at what inn we may best repose? As to the end of the third day, we know where that will find us, viz., in the arms, and under the roof, of our beloved Hayley.

General Cowper, having heard a rumor of this intended migration, desires to meet me on the road, that we may once more see each other. He lives at Ham, near Kingston. Shall we go through Kingston or near it? For I would give him as little trouble as possible, though he offers very kindly to come as far as Barnet for that purpose. Nor must I forget Carwardine, who so kindly desired to be informed what way we should go. On what point of the road will it be easiest for him to find us? On all these points you must be my oracle. My friend and brother, we shall overwhelm you with our numbers; this is all the trouble that I have left. My Johnny of Norfolk, happy in the thought of accompanying us, would be broken-hearted to be left behind.

In the midst of all these solicitudes, I laugh to think what they are made of, and what an important thing it is for me to travel. Other men steal away from their homes silently, and make no disturbance, but when I move, houses are turned upside down, maids are turned out of their beds, all the counties through which I pass appear to be in an uproar—Surrey greets me by the mouth of the General, and Essex by that of Carwardine. How strange does all this seem to a man who has seen no bustle, and made none for twenty years together!

Adieu! W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.*

July 25, 1792.

My dear Mr. Bull,—Engaged as I have been ever since I saw you, it was not possible that I should write sooner; and, busy as I am at present, it is not without difficulty that I can write even now: but I promised you a letter, and must endeavor, at least, to be as good as my word. How do you imagine I have been occupied these last ten days? In sitting, not on cockatrice' eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humor, nor because I was too sick to move; but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would, therefore, bring a painter from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days; and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over. You have now, I know, a burning curiosity to learn two things, which I may choose whether I will tell you or not; First, who was the painter; and secondly, how he has succeeded. The painter's name is Abbot. You never heard of him, you say. It is very likely; but there is, nevertheless, such a painter, and an excellent one he is. *Multa sunt quæ bonus Bernardus nec vidit, nec audivit.* To your second inquiry, I answer, that he has succeeded to admiration. The likeness is so strong, that when my friends enter the room where the picture is, they start, astonished to see me where they know I am not. Miserable man that you are, to be at Brighton instead of being here, to contemplate this prodigy of art, which, therefore, you can never see; for it goes to London next Monday, to be suspended awhile at Abbot's; and then proceeds into Norfolk, where it will be suspended forever.

But the picture is not the only prodigy I have to tell you of. A greater belongs to me; and one that you will hardly credit, even on my own testimony. We are on the eve of a journey, and a long one. On this very day se'nnight we set out for Eartham, the seat of my brother bard, Mr. Hayley, on the other side of London, nobody knows where, a hundred and twenty miles off. Pray for us, my friend, that we may have a safe going and return. It is a tremendous exploit, and I feel a thousand anxieties when I think of it. But a promise made to him when he was here, that we would go if we could, and a sort of persuasion that we can if we will, oblige us to it. The journey, and the change of air, together with the novelty to us of the scene to which we are going, may, I hope, be useful to us both; especially to Mrs. Unwin, who has most need of restoratives. She sends her love to you and to Thomas, in which she is sincerely joined by

Your affectionate W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 29, 1792.

Through floods and flames to your retreat
I win my desp'rate way,
And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
Will echo your huzza.

You will wonder at the word *desp'rate* in the second line, and at the *if* in the third: but could you have any conception of the fears I have had to bustle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions, it happens, that as the day approaches my terrors abate: for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must, after all, have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now, that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has however opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. On Wednesday, therefore, we set forth.

The terrors that I have spoken of would appear ridiculous to most, but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well that, to whatever cause it be owing, (whether to constitution, or to God's express appointment) I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night season. I cannot help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise; and, though you may think there is much of the imaginary in it, will not deem it for that reason an evil less to be lamented—so much for fears and distresses. Soon I hope they shall all have a joyful termination, and I, my Mary, my Johnny, and my dog, be skipping with delight at Eartham!

Well! this picture is at last finished, and well finished, I can assure you. Every creature that has seen it has been astonished at the resemblance. Sam's boy bowed to it, and Beau walked up to it, wagging his tail as he went, and evidently showing that he acknowledged its likeness to his master. It is a half-length, as it is technically but absurdly called; that is to say, it gives all but the foot and ankle. To-morrow it goes to town, and will hang some months at Abbot's, when it will be sent to its due destination in Norfolk.*

I hope, or rather wish, that at Eartham I may recover that habit of study which, inveterate as it once seemed, I now seem to have lost—lost to such a degree that it is even painful to me to think of what it will cost me to acquire it again.

Adieu! my dear, dear Hayley: God give us a happy meeting. Mary sends her love—she is in pretty good plight this morning, having slept well, and for her part, has no fears at all about the journey.

Ever yours, W. C.

* To Mrs. Bodham's.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

July 30, 1792.

My dear Friend,—Like you, I am obliged to snatch short opportunities of corresponding with my friends; and to write what I can, not what I would. Your kindness in giving me the first letter after your return claims my thanks; and my tardiness to answer it would demand an apology, if, having been here, and witnessed how much my time is occupied in attendance on my poor patient, you could possibly want one. She proceeds, I trust, in her recovery: but at so slow a rate, that the difference made in a week is hardly perceptible to me, who am always with her. This last night has been the worst she has known since her illness—entirely sleepless till seven in the morning. Such ill rest seems but an indifferent preparation for a long journey, which we purpose to undertake on Wednesday, when we set out for Eartham, on a visit to Mr. Hayley. The journey itself will, I hope, be useful to her; and the air of the sea, blowing over the South Downs, together with the novelty of the scene to us, will, I hope, be serviceable to us both. You may imagine that we, who have been resident on one spot so many years, do not engage in such an enterprise without some anxiety. Persons accustomed to travel would make themselves merry with mine; it seems so disproportioned to the occasion. Once I have been on the point of determining not to go, and even since we fixed the day; my troubles have been so insupportable. But it has been made a matter of much prayer, and at last it has pleased God to satisfy me, in some measure, that his will corresponds with our purpose, and that He will afford us his protection. You, I know, will not be unmindful of us during our absence from home; but will obtain for us, if your prayers can do it, all that we would ask for ourselves—the presence and favor of God, a salutary effect of our journey, and a safe return.

I rejoiced, and had reason to do so, in your coming to Weston, for I think the Lord came with you. Not, indeed, to abide with me; not to restore me to that intercourse with Him which I enjoyed twenty years ago; but to awaken in me, however, more spiritual feeling than I have experienced, except in two instances, during all that time. The comforts that I had received under your ministry, in better days, all rushed upon my rec-

* Private correspondence.

ollection; and, during two or three transient moments, seemed to be in a degree renewed. You will tell me that, transient as they were, they were yet evidences of a love that is not so; and I am desirous to believe it.

With Mrs. Unwin's warm remembrances, and my cousin Johnson's best compliments, I am

Sincerely yours, W. C.

P. S.—If I hear from you while I am abroad, your letter will find me at William Hayley's, Esq., Eartham, near Chichester. We propose to return in about a month.

Cowper records the particulars of this visit in the following letters.

TO THE REV. MR. GREATHEED.

Eartham, Aug. 6, 1792.

My dear Sir,—Having first thanked you for your affectionate and acceptable letter, I will proceed, as well as I can, to answer your equally affectionate request, that I would send you early news of our arrival at Eartham. Here we are in the most elegant mansion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure-grounds that I have ever seen; but which, dissipated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say, that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape bounded by the sea, and in one part by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library, in which I am writing.

It pleased God to carry us both through the journey with far less difficulty and inconvenience than I expected. I began it indeed with a thousand fears, and when we arrived the first evening at Barnet, found myself oppressed in spirit to a degree that could hardly be exceeded. I saw Mrs. Unwin weary, as she might well be, and heard such noises, both within the house, and without, that I concluded she would get no rest. But I was mercifully disappointed. She rested, though not well, yet sufficiently; and when we finished our next day's journey at Ripley, we were both in better condition, both of body and mind, than on the day preceding. At Ripley we found a quiet inn that housed, as it happened, that night, no company but ourselves. There we slept well, and rose perfectly refreshed; and, except some terrors that I felt at passing over the Sussex hills by moonlight, met with little to complain of, till we arrived about ten o'clock at Eartham. Here we are as happy as it is in the power of terrestrial good to make us. It is almost a paradise in which we dwell; and our reception has been the kindest that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive. Our host mentions you with great respect, and bids me tell you that he esteems you highly. Mrs. Unwin, who is, I think, in some points, already the better for her excursion, unites with mine her best compliments both to yourself and Mrs. Greatheed. I have much to see and enjoy before I can be perfectly apprized of all the delights of Eartham, and will therefore now subscribe myself

Yours, my dear sir,
With great sincerity, W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Eartham, August 12, 1792.

My dearest Catharina,—Though I have travelled far, nothing did I see in my travels that surprised me half so agreeably as your kind letter; for high as my opinion of your good-nature is, I had no hopes of hearing from you till I should have written first: a pleasure which I intended to allow myself the first opportunity.

After three days' confinement in a coach, and suffering as we went all that could be suffered from excessive heat and dust, we found ourselves late in the evening at the door of our friend Hayley. In every other respect the journey was extremely pleasant. At the Mitre, in Barnet, where we lodged the first evening, we found our friend Rose, who had walked thither from his house in Chancery-lane to meet us; and at Kingston, where we dined the second day, I found my old and much-valued friend, General Cowper, whom I had not seen in thirty years, and but for this journey should never have seen again. Mrs. Unwin, on whose account I had a thousand fears, before we set out, suffered as little from fatigue as myself, and begins, I hope, already to feel some beneficial effects from the air of Eartham, and the exercise that she takes in one of the most delightful pleasure-grounds in the world. They occupy three sides of a hill, lofty enough to command a view of the sea, which skirts the horizon to a length of many miles, with the Isle of Wight at the end of it. The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated, and enclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had, for my part, no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a paradise; and his house is as elegant as his scenes are charming.*

But think not, my dear Catharina, that amidst all these beauties I shall lose the remembrance of the peaceful, but less splendid, Weston. Your precincts will be as dear to

* This residence afterwards became the property of the late William Huskisson, Esq.

me as ever, when I return; though when that day will arrive I know not, our host being determined, as I plainly see, to keep us as long as possible. Give my best love to your husband. Thank him most kindly for his attention to the old bard of Greece, and pardon me that I do not now send you an epitaph for Fop. I am not sufficiently recollected to compose even a bagatelle at present; but in due time you shall receive it.

Hayley, who will some time or other I hope see you at Weston, is already prepared to love you both, and, being passionately fond of music, longs much to hear you.

Adieu. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Eartham, Aug. 14, 1792.

My dear Friend,—Romney is here: it would add much to my happiness if you were of the party; I have prepared Hayley to think highly, that is, justly, of you, and the time, I hope, will come when you will supersede all need of my recommendation.

Mrs. Unwin gathers strength. I have indeed great hopes, from the air and exercise which this fine season affords her opportunity to use, that ere we return she will be herself again. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Eartham, Aug. 18, 1792.

Wishes in this world are generally vain, and in the next we shall make none. Every day I wish you were of the party, knowing how happy you would be in a place where we have nothing to do but enjoy beautiful scenery and converse agreeably.

Mrs. Unwin's health continues to improve; and even I, who was well when I came, find myself still better.

Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Eartham, Aug. 25, 1792.

Without waiting for an answer to my last, I send my dear Catharina the epitaph she desired, composed as well as I could compose it in a place where every object, being still new to me, distracts my attention, and makes me as awkward at verse as if I had never dealt in it. Here it is.

EPITAPH ON FOP;

A DOG, BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

Though once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honor claim!
No sycophant, although of spaniel race!
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase!
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets rejoice!
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice.
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you!

"Yes!" the indignant shade of Fop replies,
"And worn with vain pursuit, man also dies!"

I am here, as I told you in my last, delightfully situated, and in the enjoyment of all that the most friendly hospitality can impart; yet do I neither forget Weston, nor my friends at Weston: on the contrary, I have at length, though much and kindly pressed to make a longer stay, determined on the day of our departure—on the seventeenth day of September we shall leave Eartham; four days will be necessary to bring us home again, for I am under a promise to General Cowper to dine with him on the way, which cannot be done comfortably, either to him or to ourselves, unless we sleep that night at Kingston.

The air of this place has been, I believe, beneficial to us both. I indeed was in tolerable health before I set out, but have acquired since I came, both a better appetite and a knack of sleeping almost as much in a single night as formerly in two. Whether double quantities of that article will be favorable to me as a poet, time must show. About myself, however, I care little, being made of materials so tough, as not to threaten me even now, at the end of so many *lustrums*, with anything like a speedy dissolution. My chief concern has been about Mrs. Unwin, and my chief comfort at this moment is, that she likewise has received, I hope, considerable benefit by the journey.

Tell my dear George that I begin to long to behold him again, and, did it not savor of ingratitude to the friend under whose roof I am so happy at present, should be impatient to find myself once more under yours.

Adieu! my dear Catharina. I have nothing to add in the way of news, except that Romney has drawn me in crayons, by the suffrage of all here, extremely like. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.*

Eartham, Aug. 26, 1792.

My dear Sir.—Your kind but very affecting letter found me not at Weston, to which place it was directed, but in a bower of my friend Hayley's garden at Eartham, where I was sitting with Mrs. Unwin. We both knew the moment we saw it from whom it came, and, observing a red seal, both com-

* This amiable and much esteemed character, and endeared as one of the friends of Cowper, was born at Bishopstone in Sussex, in 1763. He was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1793, and died at a premature age, in 1801. His claims as an author principally rest on his once popular poem of the "Village Curate." He also wrote "A Vindication of the University of Oxford from the Aspersions of Mr. Gibbon." His works are published in 3 vols.

forted ourselves that all was well at Burwash: but we soon felt that we were not called to rejoice, but to mourn with you;* we do indeed sincerely mourn with you, and, if it will afford you any consolation to know it, you may be assured that every eye here has testified what our hearts have suffered for you. Your loss is great, and your disposition I perceive such as exposes you to feel the whole weight of it: I will not add to your sorrow by a vain attempt to assuage it; your own good sense, and the piety of your principles, will, of course, suggest to you the most powerful motives of acquiescence in the will of God. You will be sure to recollect that the stroke, severe as it is, is not the stroke of an enemy, but of a father; and will find I trust, hereafter, that like a father he has done you good by it. Thousands have been able to say, and myself as loud as any of them, it has been good for me that I was afflicted; but time is necessary to work us to this persuasion, and in due time it shall be yours. Mr. Hayley, who tenderly sympathizes with you, has enjoined me to send you as pressing an invitation as I can frame, to join me at this place. I have every motive to wish your consent; both your benefit and my own, which, I believe, would be abundantly answered by your coming, ought to make me eloquent in such a cause. Here you will find silence and retirement in perfection, when you would seek them; and here such company as I have no doubt would suit you, all cheerful, but not noisy; and all alike disposed to love you: you and I seem to have here a fair opportunity of meeting. It were a pity we should be in the same county and not come together. I am here till the seventeenth of September, an interval that will afford you time to make the necessary arrangements, and to gratify me at last with an interview, which I have long desired. Let me hear from you soon, that I may have double pleasure, the pleasure of expecting as well as that of seeing you.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, though still a sufferer by her last illness, is much better, and has received considerable benefit by the air of Eartham. She adds to mine her affectionate compliments, and joins me and Hayley in this invitation.

Mr. Romney is here, and a young man a cousin of mine. I tell you who we are, that you may not be afraid of us.

Adieu! May the Comforter of all the afflicted, who seek him, be yours! God bless you! W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Eartham, Aug. 26, 1792.

I know not how it is, my dearest coz., but, in a new scene and surrounded with strange objects, I find my powers of thinking dissipated to a degree, that makes it difficult to me even to write a letter, and even a letter to you; but such a letter as I can, I will, and have the fairest chance to succeed this morning, Hayley, Romney, Hayley's son, and Beau, being all gone together to the sea for bathing. The sea, you must know, is nine miles off, so that, unless stupidity prevent, I shall have opportunity to write not only to you, but to poor Hurdis also, who is broken-hearted for the loss of his favorite sister, lately dead; and whose letter, giving an account of it, which I received yesterday, drew tears from the eyes of all our party. My only comfort respecting even yourself is, that you write in good spirits, and assure me that you are in a state of recovery; otherwise I should mourn not only for Hurdis, but for myself, lest a certain event should reduce me, and in a short time too, to a situation as distressing as his; for though nature designed you only for my cousin, you have had a sister's place in my affections ever since I knew you. The reason is, I suppose, that, having no sister, the daughter of my own mother, I thought it proper to have one, the daughter of yours. Certain it is, that I can by no means afford to lose you, and that, unless you will be upon honor with me to give me always a true account of yourself, at least when we are not together, I shall always be unhappy, because always suspicious that you deceive me.

Now for ourselves. I am, without the least dissimulation, in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite, and a double portion of sleep, be advantageous, such are the advantages that I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind, which I have had these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here, and, could I be translated to Paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us. So much for myself. Mrs. Unwin is evidently the better for her jaunt, though by no means as she was before this last attack; still wanting help when she would rise from her seat, and a support in walking; but she is able to use more exercise than she could at home, and moves with rather a less tottering step. God knows what he designs for me, but when I see those who are dearer to me than myself distempered and enfeebled, and myself as strong as in the days of my youth, I tremble for the solitude in which a few years may place me. I wish her and you to die before me, but not till I am more likely to follow immediately. Enough of this!

Romney has drawn me in crayons, and, in

* Mr Hurdis had just lost a favorite sister.

the opinion of all here, with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible.*

The seventeenth of September is the day on which I intend to leave Eartham. We shall then have been six weeks resident here; a holiday time long enough for a man who has much to do. And now, farewell!

W. C.

P. S. Hayley, whose love for me seems to be truly that of a brother, has given me his picture, drawn by Romney, about fifteen years ago; an admirable likeness.

TO MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.†

Eartham, Sept., 1792.

Dear Madam,—Your two counsellors are of one mind. We both are of opinion that you will do well to make your second volume a suitable companion to the first, by embellishing it in the same manner; and have no doubt, considering the well-deserved popularity of your verse, that the expense will be amply refunded by the public.

I would give you, madam, not my counsel only, but consolation also, were I not disqualified for that delightful service by a great dearth of it in my own experience. I too often seek but cannot find it. Of this, however, I can assure you, if that may at all comfort you, that both my friend Hayley and myself most truly sympathize with you under all your sufferings. Neither have you, I am persuaded, in any degree lost the interest you always had in him, or your claim to any service that it may be in his power to render you. Had you no other title to his esteem, his respect for your talents, and his feelings for your misfortunes, must ensure to you the friendship of such a man forever. I know, however, there are seasons when, look which way we will, we see the same dismal gloom enveloping all objects. This is itself an affliction; and the worse, because it makes us think ourselves more unhappy than we are: and at such a season it is, I doubt not, that you suspect a diminution of our friend's zeal to serve you.

I was much struck by an expression in your letter to Hayley, where you say that you "will endeavor to take an interest in green leaves again." This seems the sound of my own voice reflected to me from a distance; I have so often had the same thought and desire. A day scarcely passes, at this season of the year, when I do not contemplate the trees so soon to be stript, and say, "Perhaps I shall never see you clothed again." Every year, as it passes, makes this expectation more reasonable; and the year with me cannot be very distant, when the event will verify it. Well, may God grant us a good hope of arriving in due time where the leaves never fall, and all will be right!

Mrs. Unwin, I think, is a little better than when you saw her; but still so feeble as to keep me in a state of continual apprehension. I live under the point of a sword suspended by a hair. Adieu, my dear madam; and believe me to remain your sincere and affectionate humble servant,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Eartham, Sept. 9, 1792.

My dearest Cousin,—I determine, if possible, to send you one more letter, or at least, if possible, once more to send you something like one, before we leave Eartham. But I am in truth so unaccountably local in the use of my pen, that, like the man in the fable, who could leap well nowhere but at Rhodes, I seem incapable of writing at all, except at Weston. This is, as I have already told you, a delightful place; more beautiful scenery I have never beheld, nor expect to behold; but the charms of it, uncommon as they are, have not in the least alienated my affections from Weston. The genius of that place suits me better, it has an air of snug concealment, in which a disposition like mine feels peculiarly gratified; whereas here I see from every window woods like forests, and hills like mountains, a wildness, in short, that rather increases my natural melancholy, and which, were it not for the agreeables I find within, would soon convince me that mere change of place can avail me little. Accordingly, I have not looked out for a house in Sussex, nor shall.

The intended day of our departure continues to be the seventeenth. I hope to re-conduct Mrs. Unwin to the Lodge with her health considerably mended; but it is in the article of speech chiefly, and in her powers of walking, that she is sensible of much improvement. Her sight and her hand still fail her, so that she can neither read nor work; both mortifying circumstances to her, who is never willingly idle.

On the eighteenth I purpose to dine with the General, and to rest that night at Kingston, but the pleasure I shall have in the interview will hardly be greater than the pain I shall feel at the end of it, for we shall part, probably to meet no more.

Johnny, I know, has told you that Mr. Hurdis is here. Distressed by the loss of his sister, he has renounced the place where she died forever, and is about to enter on a new course of life at Oxford. You would admire him much, he is gentle in his manners, and delicate in his person, resembling our

* This portrait is now in the possession of Dr. Johnson's family.

† Private correspondence.

poor friend, Unwin, both in face and figure, more than any one I have seen. But he has not, at least he has not at present, his vivacity.

I have corresponded since I came here with Mrs. Courtenay, and had yesterday a very kind letter from her.

Adieu, my dear; may God bless you. Write to me as soon as you can after the twentieth. I shall then be at Weston, and indulging myself in the hope that I shall ere long see you there also. W. C.

Hayley, speaking of the manner in which they employed their time at Eartham, observes, "Homer was not the immediate object of our attention. The morning hours that we could bestow upon books were chiefly devoted to a complete revisal and correction of all the translations, which my friend had finished, from the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton: and we generally amused ourselves after dinner in forming together a rapid metrical version of Andreini's Adamo.* He also mentions the interest excited in Cowper's mind by his son, a fine boy of eleven years, whose uncommon talents and engaging qualities endeared him so much to the poet, that he allowed and invited him to criticise his Homer. A specimen of this juvenile criticism will appear in the future correspondence. This interesting boy, with a young companion, employed themselves regularly twice a day in drawing Mrs. Unwin in a commodious garden-chair, round the airy hill at Eartham. "To Cowper and to me," he adds, "it was a very pleasing spectacle to see the benevolent vivacity of blooming youth thus continually laboring for the ease, health, and amusement of disabled age."

The reader will perceive from the last letter, that Cowper, amused as he was with the scenery of Sussex, began to feel the powerful attraction of home.

TO MRS. COURTENAY,* WESTON-UNDERWOOD.†

Eartham, Sept. 10, 1792.

My dear Catharina,—I am not so uncourteous a knight as to leave your last kind letter, and the last I hope that I shall receive for a long time to come, without an attempt, at least, to acknowledge and to send you something in the shape of an answer to it; but, having been obliged to dose myself last night with laudanum, on account of a little nervous fever, to which I am always subject, and for which I find it the best remedy, I feel myself this morning particularly under the influence of Lethean vapors, and, consequently, in danger of being uncommonly stupid!

You could hardly have sent me intelligence that would have gratified me more than that of my two dear friends, Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, having departed from Paris two days before the terrible 10th of August. I have had many anxious thoughts on their

* This is one of those scarce and curious books which is not to be procured without difficulty. It is a dramatic representation of the Fall, remarkable, not so much for any peculiar vigor, either in the conception or execution of the plan, as for exhibiting that mode of celebrating sacred subjects, formerly known under the appellation of mysteries. A further interest is also attached to it from the popular persuasion that this work first suggested to Milton the design of his Paradise Lost. There is the same allegorical imagery, and sufficient to form the frame-work of that immortal poem. Johnson, in his Life of Milton, alludes to the report, without arriving at any decided conclusion on the subject, but states, that Milton's original intention was to have formed, not a narrative, but a dramatic work, and that he subsequently began to reduce it to its present form, about the year 1655. Some sketches of this plan are to be seen in the library of Trinity college, Cambridge. Dr. Joseph Warton and Hayley both incline to the opinion that the Adamo of Andreini first suggested the hint of the Paradise Lost.

That the Italians claim this honor for their countryman is evident from the following passage from Tiraboschi, which, to those of our readers who are conversant with that language, will be an interesting quotation. "Certo benche L'Adamo dell Andreini sia in confronto dell Paradiso Perduto ciò che è il Poema di Ennio in confronto a quel di Virgilio, nondimeno non può negarsi che le idee gigantesche, delle quali l'autore Inglese ha abbellito il suo Poema, di Satana, che entra nel Paradiso terrestre, e arde d' invidia at vedere la felicita dell' Uomo, del congresso de Demonj, della battaglia degli Angioli contra Lucifero, e piu altre sommiglianti immagini veggonsi nell' *Adamo* adombrate per modo, che a me sembra molto credibile, che anche il Milton dalle immondezze, se cosi è lecito dire, dell' Andreini raccogliesse l'oro, di cui adorno il suo Poema. Per altro *L'Adamo* dell' Andreini, benche abbia alcuni tratti di pessimo gusto, ne hà altri ancora, che si posson proporre come modello di excellente poesia."

It is no disparagement to Milton to have been indebted to the conceptions of another for the origin of his great undertaking. If Milton borrowed, it was to repay with largeness of interest. The only use that he made of the suggestion was, to stamp upon it the immortality of his own creative genius, and to produce a work which is destined to survive to the latest period of British literature.

For farther information on this subject, we refer the reader to the "Inquiry into the Origin of Paradise Lost," in Todd's excellent edition of Milton; and in Hayley's Life of Milton will be found Cowper's and Hayley's joint version of the first three acts of the Adamo above mentioned.

In addition to the Adamo of Andreini, Milton is said to have been indebted to the Du Bartas of Sylvester, and to the Adamus Exul of Grotius. Hayley, in his Life of Milton, enumerates also a brief list of Italian writers, who may possibly have thrown some suggestions into the mind of the poet. But the boldest act of imposition ever recorded in the annals of literature, is the charge preferred against Milton by Lauder, who endeavored to prove that he was "the worst and greatest of all plagiaries." He asserted that "Milton had borrowed the substance of whole books together, and that there was scarcely a single thought or sentiment in his poem which he had not stolen from some author or other, notwithstanding his vain pretence to *things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme*." In support of this charge, he was base enough to corrupt the text of those poets, whom he produced as evidences against the originality of Milton, by interpolating several verses either of his own fabrication, or from the Latin translation of *Paradise Lost*, by William Hog. This gross libel he entitled an "Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns;" and so far imposed on Dr. Johnson, by his representations, as to prevail upon him to furnish a preface to his work. The public are indebted to Dr. Douglas, the Bishop of Salisbury, for first detecting this imposture, in a pamphlet entitled "Milton vindicated from the charge of Plagiarism brought against him by Mr. Lauder." Thus exposed to infamy and contempt, he made a public recantation of his error, and soon after quitted England for the West Indies, where he died in 1771.

* Now Dowager Lady Throckmorton.

† Private correspondence.

account; and am truly happy to learn that they have sought a more peaceful region, while it was yet permitted them to do so. They will not, I trust, revisit those scenes of tumult and horror while they shall continue to merit that description. We are here all of one mind respecting the cause in which the Parisians are engaged; wish them a free people, and as happy as they can wish themselves. But their conduct has not always pleased us; we are shocked at their sanguinary proceedings, and begin to fear, myself in particular, that they will prove themselves unworthy, because incapable of enjoying it, of the inestimable blessing of liberty. My daily toast is, Sobriety and freedom to the French; for they seem as destitute of the former as they are eager to secure the latter.

We still hold our purpose of leaving Eartham on the seventeenth; and again my fears on Mrs. Unwin's account begin to trouble me; but they are now not quite so reasonable as in the first instance. If she could bear the fatigue of travelling then, she is more equal to it at present; and, supposing that nothing happens to alarm her, which is very probable, may be expected to reach Weston in much better condition than when she left it. Her improvement, however, is chiefly in her looks, and in the articles of speaking and walking; for she can neither rise from her chair without help, nor walk without a support, nor read, nor use her needle. Give my love to the good doctor, and make him acquainted with the state of his patient, since he, of all men, seems to have the best right to know it.

I am proud that you are pleased with the Epitaph* I sent you, and shall be still prouder to see it perpetuated by the chisel. It is all that I have done since here I came, and all that I have been able to do. I wished, indeed, to have requited Romney, for his well-drawn copy of me, in rhyme; and have more than once or twice attempted it; but I find, like the man in the fable, who could leap only at Rhodes, that verse is almost impossible to me, except at Weston.—Tell my friend George that I am every day mindful of him, and always love him; and bid him by no means to vex himself about the tardiness of Andrews.† Remember me affectionately to William, and to Pitcairn, whom I shall hope to find with you at my return; and, should you see Mr. Buchanan, to him also. I have now charged you with commissions enow, and having added Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, and told you that I long to see you again, will conclude myself,

My dear Catharina,
Most truly yours, W. C.

* On Fop, Lady Throckmorton's dog.

† A stone-mason, who was making a pedestal for an antique bust of Homer.

Their departure from Eartham was a scene of affecting interest, and a perfect contrast to the gaiety of their arrival. Anxious to relieve the mind of Hayley from any apprehension for their safety, Cowper addressed to him the following letter from Kingston.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

The Sun, at Kingston, Sept. 18, 1792.

My dear Brother,—With no sinister accident to retard or terrify us, we find ourselves at a quarter before one, arrived safe at Kingston. I left you with a heavy heart, and with a heavy heart took leave of our dear Tom,* at the bottom of the chalk-hill. But, soon after this last separation, my troubles gushed from my eyes, and then I was better.

We must now prepare for our visit to the General. I add no more, therefore, than our dearest remembrances and prayers that God may bless you and yours, and reward you an hundred-fold for all your kindness. Tell Tom I shall always hold him dear for his affectionate attentions to Mrs. Unwin. From her heart the memory of him can never be erased. Johnny loves you all, and has his share in all these acknowledgments.

Adieu! W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 21, 1792.

My dear Hayley,—Chaos himself, even the chaos of Milton, is not surrounded with more confusion, nor has a mind more completely in a hubbub, than I experience at the present moment. At our first arrival, after long absence, we find a hundred orders to servants necessary, a thousand things to be restored to their proper places, and an endless variety of minutiæ to be adjusted; which, though individually of little importance, are momentous in the aggregate. In these circumstances I find myself so indisposed to writing, that, save to yourself, I would on no account attempt it; but to you I will give such a recital as I can of all that has passed since I sent you that short note from Kingston, knowing that, if it be a perplexed recital, you will consider the cause and pardon it. I will begin with a remark in which I am inclined to think you will agree with me, that there is sometimes more true heroism passing in a corner, and on occasions that make no noise in the world, than has often been exercised by those whom that world esteems her greatest heroes, and on occasions the most illustrious. I hope so at least; for all the heroism I have to boast, and all the opportunities I have of displaying any, are of a private nature. After writing the note, I immediately began to prepare for my ap-

* Hayley's son.

pointed visit to Ham; but the struggles that I had with my own spirit, laboring as I did under the most dreadful dejection, are never to be told. I would have given the world to have been excused. I went, however, and carried my point against myself, with a heart riven asunder—I have reasons for all this anxiety, which I cannot relate now. The visit, however passed off well, and we returned in the dark to Kingston; I, with a lighter heart than I had known since my departure from Eartham, and Mary too, for she had suffered hardly less than myself, and chiefly on my account. That night we rested well in our inn, and at twenty minutes after eight next morning set off for London; exactly at ten we reached Mr. Rose's door; we drank a dish of chocolate with him, and proceeded, Mr. Rose riding with us as far as St. Alban's. From this time we met with no impediment. In the dark, and in a storm, at eight at night, we found ourselves at our own back-door. Mrs. Unwin was very near slipping out of the chair in which she was taken from the chaise, but at last was landed safe. We all have had a good night, and are all well this morning.

God bless you, my dearest brother.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 2, 1792.

My dear Hayley,—A bad night, succeeded by an east wind, and a sky all in sables, have such an effect on my spirits, that, if I did not consult my own comfort more than yours, I should not write to-day, for I shall not entertain you much: yet your letter, though containing no very pleasant tidings, has afforded me some relief. It tells me, indeed, that you have been dispirited yourself, and that poor little Tom, the faithful 'squire of my Mary, has been seriously indisposed. All this grieves me: but then there is a warmth of heart and a kindness in it that do me good. I will endeavor not to repay you in notes of sorrow and despondence, though all my sprightly chords seem broken. In truth, one day excepted, I have not seen the day when I have been cheerful since I left you. My spirits, I think, are almost constantly lower than they were; the approach of winter is perhaps the cause, and if it is, I have nothing better to expect for a long time to come.

Yesterday was a day of assignation with myself, the day of which I said some days before it came, when that day comes I will begin my dissertations. Accordingly, when it came, I prepared to do so; filled a letter-case with fresh paper, furnished myself with a pretty good pen, and replenished my ink-bottle; but, partly from one cause, and partly from another, chiefly, however, from distress and dejection, after writing and obliterating about six lines, in the composition of which I spent near an hour, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt. An attempt so unsuccessful could have no other effect than to dishearten me, and it has had that effect to such a degree, that I know not when I shall find courage to make another. At present I shall certainly abstain, since at present I cannot well afford to expose myself to the danger of a fresh mortification. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 13, 1792.

I began a letter to you yesterday, my dearest brother, and proceeded through two sides of my sheet, but so much of my nervous fever found its way into it, that, looking over it this morning, I determined not to send it.

I have risen, though not in good spirits, yet in better than I generally do of late, and therefore will not address you in the melancholy tone that belongs to my worst feelings.

I began to be restless about your portrait, and to say, how long shall I have to wait for it? I wished it here for many reasons; the sight of it will be a comfort to me, for I not only love but am proud of you, as of a conquest made in my old age. Johnny goes to town on Monday, on purpose to call on Romney, to whom he shall give all proper information concerning its conveyance hither. The name of a man whom I esteem as I do Romney, ought not to be unmusical in my ears; but his name will be so till I shall have paid him a debt justly due to him, by doing such poetical honors to it as I intend. Heaven knows when that intention will be executed, for the muse is still as obdurate and as coy as ever.

Your kind postscript is just arrived, and gives me great pleasure. When I cannot see you myself, it seems some comfort, however, that you have been seen by another known to me; and who will tell me in a few days that he has seen you. Your wishes to disperse my melancholy would, I am sure, prevail, did that event depend on the warmth and sincerity with which you frame them; but it has baffled both wishes and prayers, and those the most fervent that could be made, so many years, that the case seems hopeless. But no more of this at present.

Your verses to Austen are as sweet as the honey that they accompany: kind, friendly, witty, and elegant! When shall I be able to do the like? Perhaps when my Mary, like your Tom, shall cease to be an invalid, I may recover a power, at least, to do something. I sincerely rejoice in the dear little man's restoration. My Mary continues, I hope, to mend a little. W. C.

TO MRS. KING.*

Oct. 14, 1792.

My dear Madam,—Your kind inquiries after mine and Mrs. Unwin's health will not permit me to be silent; though I am and have long been so indisposed to writing, that even a letter has almost overtasked me.

Your last but one found me on the point of setting out for Sussex, whither I went with Mrs. Unwin, on a visit to my friend, Mr. Hayley. We spent six weeks at Eartham, and returned on the nineteenth of September. I had hopes that change of air and change of scene might be serviceable both to my poor invalid and me. She, I hope, has received some benefit; and I am not the worse for it myself; but, at the same time, must acknowledge that I cannot boast of much amendment. The time we spent there could not fail to pass as agreeably as her weakness, and my spirits, at a low ebb, would permit. Hayley is one of the most agreeable men, as well as one of the most cordial friends. His house is elegant; his library large, and well chosen; and he is surrounded by the most delightful scenery. But I have made the experiment only to prove, what indeed I knew before, that creatures are physicians of little value, and that health and cure are from God only. Henceforth, therefore, I shall wait for those blessings from Him, and expect them at no other hand. In the meantime, I have the comfort to be able to tell you that Mrs. Unwin, on the whole, is restored beyond the most sanguine expectations I had when I wrote last; and that, as to myself, it is not much otherwise with me than it has been these twenty years; except that this season of the year is always unfavorable to my spirits.

I rejoice that you have had the pleasure of another interview with Mr. Martyn; and am glad that the trifles I have sent you afforded him any amusement. This letter has already given you to understand that I am at present no artificer of verse; and that, consequently, I have nothing new to communicate. When I have, I shall do it to none more readily than to yourself.

My dear madam,

Very affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Oct. 18, 1792.

My dear Friend,—I thought that the wonder had been all on my side, having been employed in wondering at your silence, as long as you at mine. Soon after our arrival at Eartham, I received a letter from you, which I answered, if not by the return of the post, at least in a day or two. Not that I should have insisted on the ceremonial of letter for letter, during so long a period, could I have found leisure to double your debt; but while there, I had no opportunity for writing, except now and then a short one; for we breakfasted early, studied Milton as soon as breakfast was over, and continued in that employment till Mrs. Unwin came forth from her chamber, to whom all the rest of my time was necessarily devoted. Our return to Weston was on the nineteenth of last month, according to your information. You will naturally think that, in the interval, I must have had sufficient leisure to give you notice of our safe arrival. But the fact has been otherwise. I have neither been well myself, nor is Mrs. Unwin, though better, so much improved in her health as not still to require my continual assistance. My disorder has been the old one, to which I have been subject so many years, and especially about this season—a nervous fever; not, indeed, so oppressive as it has sometimes proved, but sufficiently alarming both to Mrs. Unwin and myself, and such as made it neither easy nor proper for me to make much use of my pen while it continued. At present I am tolerably free from it; a blessing for which I believe myself partly indebted to the use of James's powder, in small quantities; and partly to a small quantity of laudanum, taken every night; but chiefly to a manifestation of God's presence vouchsafed to me a few days since; transient, indeed, and dimly seen through a mist of many fears and troubles, but sufficient to convince me, at least while the Enemy's power is a little restrained, that he has not cast me off forever.

Our visit was a pleasant one; as pleasant as Mrs. Unwin's weakness and the state of my spirits, never very good, would allow. As to my own health, I never expected that it would be much improved by the journey: nor have I found it so. Some benefit, indeed, I hoped; and, perhaps, a little more than I found. But the season was, after the first fortnight, extremely unfavorable, stormy, and wet; and the prospects, though grand and magnificent, yet rather of a melancholy cast, and consequently not very propitious to me. The cultivated appearance of Weston suits my frame of mind far better than wild hills that aspire to be mountains, covered with vast unfrequented woods, and here and there affording a peep between their summits at the distant ocean. Within doors all was hospitality and kindness, but the scenery *would* have its effect; and, though delightful in the extreme to those who had spirits to bear it, was too gloomy for me.

Yours, my dear friend,

Most sincerely,

W. C.

* Private correspondence.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 19, 1792.

My dearest Johnny,—You are too useful when you are here not to be missed on a hundred occasions daily; and too much domesticated with us not to be regretted always. I hope, therefore, that your month or six weeks will not be like many that I have known, capable of being drawn out into any length whatever, and productive of nothing but disappointment.

I have done nothing since you went, except that I have composed the better half of a sonnet to Romney; yet even this ought to bear an earlier date, for I began to be haunted with a desire to do it long before we came out of Sussex, and have daily attempted it ever since.

It would be well for the reading part of the world, if the writing part were, many of them, as dull as I am. Yet even this small produce, which my sterile intellect has hardly yielded at last, may serve to convince you that in point of spirits I am not worse.

In fact, I am a little better. The powders and the laudanum together have, for the present at least, abated the fever that consumes them; and in measure as the fever abates, I acquire a less discouraging view of things, and with it a little power to exert myself.

In the evenings I read Baker's Chronicle to Mrs. Unwin, having no other history, and hope in time to be as well versed in it as his admirer, Sir Roger de Coverley.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 22, 1792.

My dear Johnny,—Here I am, with I know not how many letters to answer, and no time to do it in. I exhort you, therefore, to set a proper value on this, as proving your priority in my attentions, though in other respects likely to be of little value.

You do well to sit for your picture, and give very sufficient reasons for doing it; you will also, I doubt not, take care that when future generations shall look at it, some spectator or other shall say, this is the picture of a good man and a useful one.

And now God bless you my dear Johnny. I proceed much after the old rate; rising cheerless and distressed in the morning, and brightening a little as the day goes on.

Adieu, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 28, 1792.

Nothing done, my dearest brother, nor likely to be done at present; yet I purpose in a day or two to make another attempt, to which, however, I shall address myself with fear and trembling, like a man who, having sprained his wrist, dreads to use it. I have not, indeed, like such a man, injured myself by any extraordinary exertion, but seem as much enfeebled as if I had. The consciousness that there is so much to do, and nothing done, is a burden I am not able to bear. Milton especially is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost as goaded with continual reproaches for neglecting him. I will therefore begin: I will do my best; and if, after all, that best prove good for nothing, I will even send the notes, worthless as they are, that I have made already; a measure very disagreeable to myself, and to which nothing but necessity shall compel me. I shall rejoice to see those new samples of your biography,* which you give me to expect.

Allons! Courage!—Here comes something, however; produced after a gestation as long as that of a pregnant woman. It is the debt long unpaid, the compliment due to Romney; and if it has your approbation, I will send it, or you may send it for me. I must premise, however, that I intended nothing less than a sonnet when I began. I know not why, but I said to myself, it shall not be a sonnet; accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half a dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last. The fates would have it so.

TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.

Romney! expert infallibly to trace,
On chart or canvas, not the form alone,
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face,
With strokes, that time ought never to erase:
Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.

But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe,
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well! I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought the cause is clear;

For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see,
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.†

Nov. 5, 1792.

My dearest Johnny,—I have done nothing since you went, except that I have finished the Sonnet which I told you I had begun, and sent it to Hayley, who is well pleased *therewith*, and has by this time transmitted it to whom it most concerns.

* Hayley's Life of Milton.
† Private correspondence.

I would not give the algebraist sixpence for his encomiums on my Task, if he condemns my Homer, which, I know, in point of language, is equal to it, and in variety of numbers superior. But the character of the former having been some years established, he follows the general cry; and should Homer establish himself as well, and I trust he will hereafter, I shall have his warm suffrage for that also. But if not—it is no matter. Swift says somewhere,—There are a few good judges of poetry in the world, who lend their taste to those who have none: and your man of figures is probably one of the borrowers.

Adieu—in great haste. Our united love attends yourself and yours, whose I am most truly and affectionately.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 9, 1792.

My dear Friend,—I wish that I were as industrious and as much occupied as you, though in a different way; but it is not so with me. Mrs. Unwin's great debility (who is not yet able to move without assistance) is of itself a hindrance such as would effectually disable me. Till she can work, and read, and fill up her time as usual (all which is at present entirely out of her power) I may now and then find time to write a letter, but I shall write nothing more. I cannot sit with my pen in my hand and my books before me, while she is in effect in solitude, silent, and looking at the fire. To this hindrance that other has been added, of which you are already aware, a want of spirits, such as I have never known, when I was not absolutely laid by, since I commenced an author. How long I shall be continued in these uncomfortable circumstances is known only to Him who, as he will, disposes of us all. I may be yet able, perhaps, to prepare the first book of the Paradise Lost for the press, before it will be wanted; and Johnson himself seems to think there will be no haste for the second. But poetry is my favorite employment, and all my poetical operations are in the meantime suspended; for, while a work to which I have bound myself remains unaccomplished, I can do nothing else.

Johnson's plan of prefixing my phiz to the new edition of my poems is by no means a pleasant one to me, and so I told him in a letter I sent him from Eartham, in which I assured him that my objections to it would not be easily surmounted. But if you judge that it may really have an effect in advancing the sale, I would not be so squeamish as to suffer the spirit of prudery to prevail in me to his disadvantage. Somebody told an author, I forget whom, that there was more vanity in refusing his picture than in granting it, on which he instantly complied. I do not perfectly feel all the force of the argument, but it shall content me that he did.

I do most sincerely rejoice in the success of your publication,* and have no doubt that my prophecy concerning your success in greater matters will be fulfilled. We are naturally pleased when our friends approve what we approve ourselves; how much then must I be pleased, when you speak so kindly of Johnny! I know him to be all that you think him, and love him entirely.

Adieu! We expect you at Christmas, and shall therefore rejoice when Christmas comes. Let nothing interfere.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.†

Nov. 11, 1792.

My dear Friend,—I am not so insensible of your kindness in making me an exception from the number of your correspondents, to whom you forbid the hope of hearing from you till your present labors are ended, as to make you wait longer for an answer to your last; which, indeed, would have had its answer before this time, had it been possible for me to write. But so many have demands upon me of a similar kind, and while Mrs. Unwin continues an invalid, my opportunities of writing are so few, that I am constrained to incur a long arrear to some, with whom I would wish to be punctual. She can at present neither work nor read; and, till she can do both, and amuse herself as usual, my own amusements of the pen must be suspended.

I, like you, have a work before me, and a work to which I should be glad to address myself in earnest, but cannot do it at present. When the opportunity comes, I shall, like you, be under a necessity of interdicting some of my usual correspondents, and of shortening my letters to the excepted few. Many letters and much company are incompatible with authorship, and the one as much as the other. It will be long, I hope, before the world is put in possession of a publication, which you design should be posthumous.

Oh for the day when your expectations of my complete deliverance shall be verified! At present it seems very remote: so distant, indeed, that hardly the faintest streak of it is visible in my horizon. The glimpse, with which I was favored about a month since, has never been repeated; and the depression of my spirits has. The future appears gloomy as ever; and I seem to myself to be scrambling always in the dark, among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at my heels, prepared to push

* Decisions of the English Courts.
† Private correspondence.

me headlong. Thus I have spent twenty years, but thus I shall not spend twenty years more. Long ere that period arrives, the grand question concerning my everlasting weal or woe will be decided.

Adieu, my dear friend. I have exhausted my time, though not filled my paper.

Truly yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 20, 1792.

My dearest Johnny,—I give you many thanks for your rhymes, and your verses without rhyme; for your poetical dialogue between wood and stone: between Homer's head and the head of Samuel; kindly intended, I know very well, for my amusement, and that amused me much.

The successor of the clerk defunct, for whom I used to write, arrived here this morning, with a recommendatory letter from Joe Rye, and an humble petition of, his own, entreating me to assist him as I had assisted his predecessor. I have undertaken the service, although with no little reluctance, being involved in many arrears on other subjects, and having very little dependence at present on my ability to write at all. I proceed exactly as when you were here—a letter now and then before breakfast, and the rest of my time all holiday; if holiday it may be called, that is spent chiefly in moping and musing, and "*forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils.*"

The fever on my spirits has harassed me much, and I have never had so good a night, nor so quiet a rising, since you went, as on this very morning; a relief that I account particularly seasonable and propitious, because I had, in my intentions, devoted this morning to you, and could not have fulfilled those intentions, had I been as spiritless as I generally am.

I am glad that Johnson is in no haste for Milton, for I seem myself not likely to address myself presently to that concern, with any prospect of success; yet something now and then, like a secret whisper, assures and encourages me that it will yet be done.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 25, 1792.

How shall I thank you enough for the interest you take in my future Miltonic labors, and the assistance you promise me in the performance of them; I will some time or other, if I live, and live a poet, acknowledge your friendship in some of my best verse; the most suitable return one poet can make to another: in the meantime, I love you, and am sensible of all your kindness. You wish me warm in my work, and I ardently wish the same: but when I shall be so God only knows. My melancholy, which seemed a little alleviated for a few days, has gathered about me again with as black a cloud as ever; the consequence is absolute incapacity to begin.

I was for some years dirge-writer to the town of Northampton, being employed by the clerk of the principal parish there to furnish him with an annual copy of verses proper to be printed at the foot of his bill of mortality; but the clerk died, and, hearing nothing for two years from his successor, I well hoped that I was out of my office. The other morning however Sam announced the new clerk; he came to solicit the same service as I had rendered his predecessor, and I reluctantly complied; doubtful, indeed, whether I was capable. I have however achieved that labor, and I have done nothing more. I am just sent for up to Mary, dear Mary! Adieu! she is as well as when I left you, I would I could say better. Remember us both affectionately to your sweet boy, and trust me for being

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Dec. 9, 1792.

My dear Friend,—You need not be uneasy on the subject of Milton. I shall not find that labor too heavy for me, if I have health and leisure. The season of the year is unfavorable to me respecting the former; and Mrs. Unwin's present weakness allows me less of the latter than the occasion seems to call for. But the business is in no haste. The artists employed to furnish the embellishments are not likely to be very expeditious; and a small portion only of the work will be wanted from me at once: for the intention is to deal it out to the public piece-meal. I am, therefore, under no great anxiety on that account. It is not, indeed, an employment that I should have chosen for myself; because poetry pleases and amuses me more, and would cost me less labor, properly so called. All this I felt before I engaged with Johnson; and did, in the first instance, actually decline the service; but he was urgent; and, at last, I suffered myself to be persuaded.

The season of the year, as I have already said, is particularly adverse to me: yet not in itself, perhaps, more adverse than any other; but the approach of it always reminds me of the same season in the dreadful seventy-three, and in the more dreadful eighty-six. I cannot help terrifying myself with doleful misgivings and apprehensions: nor is the enemy negligent to seize all the advantage that the occasion gives him. Thus, hearing much

* Private correspondence.

from him, and having little or no sensible support from God, I suffer inexpressible things till January is over. And even then, whether increasing years have made me more liable to it, or despair, the longer it lasts, grows naturally darker, I find myself more inclined to melancholy than I was a few years since. God only knows where this will end; but where it is likely to end, unless he interpose powerfully in my favor, all may know.

I remain, my dear friend, most sincerely yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 16, 1792.

My dear Sir,—We differ so little, that it is pity we should not agree. The possibility of restoring our diseased government is, I think, the only point on which we are not of one mind. If you are right, and it cannot be touched in the medical way, without danger of absolute ruin to the constitution, keep the doctors at a distance say I—and let us live as long as we can. But perhaps physicians might be found of skill sufficient for the purpose, were they but as willing as able. Who are they? Not those honest blunderers, the mob, but our governors themselves. As it is in the power of any individual to be honest if he will, any body of men are, as it seems to me, equally possessed of the same option. For I can never persuade myself to think the world so constituted by the Author of it, and human society, which is his ordinance, so shabby a business, that the buying and selling of votes and consciences should be essential to its existence. As to multiplied representation I know not that I foresee any great advantage likely to arise from that. Provided there be but a reasonable number of reasonable heads laid together for the good of the nation, the end may as well be answered by five hundred as it would be by a thousand, and perhaps better. But then they should be honest as well as wise, and, in order that they may be so, they should put it out of their own power to be otherwise. This they might certainly do if they would; and, would they do it, I am not convinced that any great mischief would ensue. You say, "somebody must have influence," but I see no necessity for it. Let integrity of intention and a due share of ability be supposed, and the influence will be in the right place; it will all centre in the zeal and good of the nation. That will influence their debates and decisions, and nothing else ought to do it. You will say, perhaps, that wise men, and honest men, as they are supposed, they are yet liable to be split into almost as many differences of opinion as there are individuals; but I rather think not. It is observed of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, that each always approved and seconded the plans and views of the other: and the reason given for it is that they were men of equal ability. The same cause that could make two unanimous would make twenty so, and would at least secure a majority among as many hundreds.

As to the reformation of the church, I want none, unless by a better provision for the inferior clergy; and, if that could be brought about by emaciating a little some of our too corpulent dignitaries, I should be well contented.

The dissenters, I think, Catholics and others, have all a right to the privileges of all other Englishmen, because to deprive them is persecution, and persecution on any account, but especially on a religious one, is an abomination. But after all, *valeat respublica.* I love my country, I love my king, and I wish peace and prosperity to Old England.*

Adieu! W. C.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 17, 1792.

My dear Sir,—You are very kind in thinking it worth while to inquire after so irregular a correspondent. When I had read your last, I persuaded myself that I had answered your obliging letter received while I was at Eartham, and seemed clearly to remember it; but upon better recollection, am inclined to think myself mistaken, and that I have many pardons to ask for neglecting to do it so long.

While I was at Mr. Hayley's I could hardly find opportunity to write to anybody. He is an early riser and breakfasts early, and unless I could rise early enough myself to despatch a letter before breakfast, I had no leisure to do it at all. For immediately after breakfast we repaired to the library, where we studied in concert till noon; and the rest of my time was so occupied by necessary attention to my poor invalid, Mrs. Unwin, and by various other engagements, that to write was impossible.

* The question of a Reform in Parliament was at this time beginning to engage the public attention, and Mr. Grey (now Earl Grey) had recently announced his intention in the House of Commons of bringing forward that important subject in the ensuing session of Parliament. It was accordingly submitted to the House, May 6th, 1793, when Mr. Grey delivered his sentiments at considerable length, embodying many of the topics now so familiar to the public, but by no means pursuing the principle to the extent since adopted. The debate lasted till two o'clock in the morning, when it was adjourned to the following day. After a renewed discussion, which continued till four in the morning, the House divided, when the numbers were as follow, viz., Ayes 40, Noes 282.

It is interesting to mark this first commencement of the popular question of Reform (if we except Mr. Pitt's measure, in 1782) and to contrast its slow progress with the final issue, under the same leader, in the year 1832. The minority for several successive years seldom exceeded the amount above specified, though the measure was at length carried by so large a majority.

Since my return, I have been almost constantly afflicted with weak and inflamed eyes, and indeed have wanted spirits as well as leisure. If you can, therefore, you must pardon me; and you will do it perhaps the rather, when I assure you that not you alone, but every person and every thing that had demands upon me has been equally neglected. A strange weariness that has long had dominion over me has indisposed and indeed disqualified me for all employment;* and my hindrances besides have been such that I am sadly in arrear in all quarters. A thousand times I have been sorry and ashamed that your MSS. are yet unrevised, and if you knew the compunction that it has cost me, you would pity me; for I feel as if I were guilty in that particular, though my conscience tells me that it could not be otherwise.

Before I received your letter written from Margate, I had formed a resolution never to be engraven, and was confirmed in it by my friend Hayley's example. But, learning since though I have not learned it from himself, that my bookseller has an intention to prefix a copy of Abbot's picture of me† to the next edition of my poems, at his own expense, if I can be prevailed upon to consent to it; in consideration of the liberality of his behavior, I have felt my determination shaken. This intelligence, however comes to me from a third person, and till it reaches me in a direct line from Johnson, I can say nothing to *him* about it. When he shall open to me his intentions himself, I will not be backward to mention to him your obliging offer, and shall be particularly gratified, if I must be engraved at last, to have that service performed for me by a friend.

I thank you for the anecdote,* which could not fail to be very pleasant, and remain, my dear sir, with gratitude and affection,

Yours, W. C.

* This expression alludes to the nervous fever and great depression of spirits that Cowper labored under, in the months of October and November, and which has been frequently mentioned in the preceding correspondence.

† There were three portraits of Cowper, taken respectively by Sir Thomas Lawrence, Abbot, and Romney. The reader may be anxious to learn which is entitled to be considered the best resemblance. The editor is able to satisfy this inquiry, on the joint authority of the three most competent witnesses, the late Rev. Dr. Johnson, the present Dowager Lady Throckmorton, and John Higgins, Esq., formerly of Weston. They all agree in assigning the superiority to the portrait by Abbot; and in evidence of this, all have repeated the anecdote mentioned by Cowper, of his dog Beau going up to the picture, and shaking his tail, in token of recognition. It is an exact resemblance of his form, features, manner, and costume. That by Romney was said to resemble him *at the moment it was taken*, but it was his *then* look, not his customary and more placid features. There is an air of wildness in it, expressive of a disordered mind, and which the shock, produced by the paralytic attack of Mrs. Unwin, was rapidly impressing on his countenance. This portrait has always been considered as awakening distressing emotions in the beholder. The portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence is the most pleasing, but not so exact and faithful a resemblance. There is however a character of peculiar interest in it, and he is represented in the cap which he was accustomed to wear in a morning, presented to him by Lady Hesketh. It was on this picture that the following beautiful lines were composed by the late Rev. Dr. Randolph.

ON SEEING A SKETCH OF COWPER BY LAWRENCE.

Sweet bard! whose mind, thus pictured in thy face,
O'er every feature spreads a nobler grace;
Whose keen, but softened eye appears to dart
A look of pity through the human heart;
To search the secrets of man's inward frame,
To weep with sorrow o'er his guilt and shame;
Sweet bard! with whom, in sympathy of choice,
I've oftimes left the world at Nature's voice,
To join the song that all her creatures raise,
To carol forth their great Creator's praise;
Or, 'rapt in visions of immortal day,
Have gazed on Truth in Zion's heavenly way;
Sweet Bard!—may this thine image, all I know,
Or ever may, of Cowper's form below,
Teach one who views it with a Christian's love,
To seek and find thee, in the realms above.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 26, 1792.

That I may not be silent, till my silence alarms you, I snatch a moment to tell you, that although *toujours triste* I am not worse than usual, but my opportunities of writing are *paucified*, as, perhaps, Dr. Johnson would have dared to say, and the few that I have are shortened by company.

Give my love to dear Tom, and thank him for his very apposite extract, which I should be happy indeed to turn to any account. How often do I wish, in the course of every day, that I could be employed once more in poetry, and how often, of course, that this Miltonic trap had never caught me! The year ninety-two shall stand chronicled in my remembrance as the most melancholy that I have ever known, except the few weeks that I spent at Eartham; and such it has been principally because, being engaged to Milton, I felt myself no longer free for any other engagement. That ill-fated work, impracticable in itself, has made everything else impracticable.

..... I am very Pindaric, and obliged to be so by the hurry of the hour. My friends are come down to breakfast.

Adieu! W. C.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, Jan. 3, 1793.

My dear Sir,—A few lines must serve to introduce to you my much-valued friend Mr. Rose, and to thank you for your very obliging attention in sending me so approved a remedy for my disorder. It is no fault of yours, but it will be a disappointment to you to know, that I have long been in possession of that remedy, and have tried it without effect; or,

* The Hon. Mrs. Boscawen had expressed her regret that Cowper should employ his time and talents in translation, instead of original composition; accompanied by a wish that he would produce another "Task," adverting to what Pope had made his friend exclaim,

"Do write next winter more 'Essays on Man.'"

to speak more truly, with an unfavorable one. Judging by the pain it causes, I conclude that it is of the caustic kind, and may, therefore, be sovereign in cases where the eyelids are ulcerated: but mine is a dry inflammation, which it has always increased as often as I have used it. I used it again, after having long since resolved to use it no more, that I might not seem, even to myself, to slight your kindness, but with no better effect than in every former instance.

You are very candid in crediting so readily the excuse I make for not having yet revised your MSS., and as kind in allowing me still longer time. I refer you for a more particular account of the circumstances that make all literary pursuits at present impracticable to me, to the young gentleman who delivers this into your hands.* He is perfectly master of the subject, having just left me after having spent a fortnight with us.

You asked me a long time since a question concerning the Olney Hymns, which I do not remember that I have ever answered. Those marked C. are mine, one excepted, which though it bears that mark, was written by Mr. Newton. I have not the collection at present and therefore cannot tell you which it is.

You must extend your charity still a little farther, and excuse a short answer to your two obliging letters. I do everything with my pen in a hurry, but will not conclude without entreating you to make my thanks and best compliments to the lady,† who was so good as to trouble herself for my sake to write a character of the medicine.

I remain, my dear sir,
Sincerely yours, W. C.

Your request does me honor. Johnson will have orders in a few days to send a copy of the edition just published.‡

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Jan. 20, 1793.

My dear Brother,—Now I know that you are safe, I treat you, as you see, with a philosophical indifference, not acknowledging your kind and immediate answer to anxious inquiries, till it suits my own convenience. I have learned, however, from my late solicitude, that not only you, but yours, interest me to a degree, that, should anything happen to either of you, would be very inconsistent with my peace. Sometimes I thought that you were extremely ill, and once or twice, that you were dead. As often some tragedy reached my ear concerning little Tom. "Oh, *vanæ mentes hominum!*" How liable are we to a thousand impositions, and how indebted to honest old Time, who never fails to undeceive us! Whatever you had in prospect, you acted kindly by me not to make me partaker of your expectations; for I have a spirit, if not so sanguine as yours, yet that would have waited for your coming with anxious impatience, and have been dismally mortified by the disappointment. Had you come, and come without notice too, you would not have surprised us more, than (as the matter was managed) we were surprised at the arrival of your picture. It reached us in the evening, after the shutters were closed, at a time when a chaise might actually have brought you without giving us the least previous intimation. Then it was, that Samuel, with his cheerful countenance, appeared at the study door, and with a voice as cheerful as his looks, exclaimed, "Mr. Hayley is come, madam!" We both started, and in the same moment cried, "Mr. Hayley come! And where is he?" The next moment corrected our mistake, and finding Mary's voice grow suddenly tremulous, I turned and saw her weeping.

I do nothing, notwithstanding all your exhortations: my idleness is proof against them all, or to speak more truly, my difficulties are so. Something indeed I do. I play at push-pin with Homer every morning before breakfast, fingering and polishing, as Paris did his armor. I have lately had a letter from Dublin on that subject, which has pleased me. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Jan. 29, 1793.

My dearest Hayley,—I truly sympathize with you under your weight of sorrow for the loss of our good Samaritan.* But be not broken-hearted, my friend! Remember the loss of those we love is the condition on which we live ourselves; and that he who chooses his friends wisely from among the excellent of the earth, has a sure ground to hope concerning them when they die, that a merciful God has made them far happier than they could be here, and that we shall join them soon again. This is solid comfort, could we but avail ourselves of it; but I confess the difficulty of doing so. Sorrow is like the deaf adder, "that hears not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely;" and I feel so much myself for the death of Austen, that my own chief consolation is, that I had never seen him. Live yourself, I beseech you, for I have seen so much of you that I can by no means spare you, and I will live as long as it shall please God to permit. I know you set some value on me, therefore let that promise comfort

* Mr. Rose.

† Mrs. Haden, formerly governess to the daughters of Lord Eardley.

‡ The fifth edition of Cowper's Poems.

* Dr. Austen, who is here alluded to, was not less distinguished for his humane and benevolent qualities, than for his professional skill and eminence.

you, and give us not reason to say, like David's servant—"We know that it would have pleased thee more if all we had died, than this one, for whom thou art inconsolable." You have still Romney, and Carwardine, and Guy, and me, my poor Mary, and I know not how many beside; as many, I suppose, as ever had an opportunity of spending a day with you. He who has the most friends must necessarily lose the most, and he whose friends are numerous as yours may the better spare a part of them. It is a changing, transient scene: yet a little while, and this poor dream of life will be over with all of us. The living, and they who live unhappy, they are indeed subjects of sorrow.

Adieu! my beloved friend,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.*

Jan. 31, 1793.

Io Pæan.

My dearest Johnny,—Even as you foretold, so it came to pass. On Tuesday I received your letter, and on Tuesday came the pheasants; for which I am indebted in many thanks, as well as Mrs. Unwin, both to your kindness and to your kind friend Mr. Copeman.

In Copeman's ear this truth let Echo tell,—
"Immortal bards like mortal pheasants well;"
And when his clerkship's out, I wish him herds
Of golden clients for his golden birds.

Our friends the Courtenays have never dined with us since their marriage, *because* we have never asked them; and we have never asked them, *because* poor Mrs. Unwin is not so equal to the task of providing for and entertaining company as before this last illness. But this is no objection to the arrival here of a bustard; rather it is a cause for which we shall be particularly glad to see the monster. It will be a handsome present to *them*. So let the bustard come, as the Lord Mayor of London said of the hare, when he was hunting—let her come, a' God's name: I am not afraid of her.

Adieu, my dear cousin and caterer. My eyes are terribly bad; else, I had much more to say to you.

Ever affectionately yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 5, 1793.

In this last revisal of my work (the Homer) I have made a number of small improvements, and am now more convinced than ever, having exercised a cooler judgment upon it than before I could, that the translation will make its way. There must be time for the conquest of vehement and long-rooted prejudice; but, without much self-partiality, I believe, that the conquest will be made; and am certain that I should be of the same opinion, were the work another man's. I shall soon have finished the Odyssey, and when I have, will send the corrected copy of both to Johnson.

Adieu! W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Feb. 10, 1793.

My pens are all split, and my ink-glass is dry;
Neither wit, common-sense, nor ideas have I.

In vain has it been, that I have made several attempts to write, since I came from Sussex; unless more comfortable days arrive than I have confidence to look for, there is an end of all writing with me. I have no spirits:—when Rose came, I was obliged to prepare for his coming by a nightly dose of laudanum—twelve drops suffice; but without them, I am devoured by melancholy.

A-propos of the Rose! His wife in her political notions is the exact counterpart of yourself—loyal in the extreme. Therefore, if you find her thus inclined, when you become acquainted with her, you must not place her resemblance of yourself to the account of her admiration of you, for she is your likeness ready made. In fact, we are all of one mind about government matters, and notwithstanding your opinion, the Rose is himself a Whig, and I am a Whig, and you, my dear, are a Tory, and all the Tories now-a-days call all the Whigs republicans. How the deuce you came to be a Tory is best known to yourself: you have to answer for this novelty to the shades of your ancestors, who were always Whigs ever since we had any.

Adieu. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 17, 1793.

My dear Friend,—I have read the critique of my work in the *Analytical Review*, and am happy to have fallen into the hands of a critic, rigorous enough indeed, but a scholar, and a man of sense, and who does not deliberately intend me mischief. I am better pleased indeed that he censures some things than I should have been with unmixed commendation, for his censure (to use the new diplomatic term) will accredit his praises. In his particular remarks he is for the most part right, and I shall be the better for them; but in his general ones I think he asserts too largely, and more than he could prove. With respect to inversions in particular, I know that they do not abound.

* Private correspondence.

Once they did, and I had Milton's example for it, not disapproved by Addison. But on ———'s remonstrance against them, I expunged the most, and in my new edition shall have fewer still. I know that they give dignity, and am sorry to part with them: but, to parody an old proverb, he who lives in the year ninety-three, must do as in the year ninety-three is done by others. The same remark I have to make on his censure of inharmonious lines. I know them to be much fewer than he asserts, and not more in number than I accounted indispensably necessary to a due variation of cadence. I have, however, now, in conformity with modern taste, (over much delicate in my mind,) given to a far greater number of them a flow as smooth as oil. A few I retain, and will, in compliment to my own judgment. He thinks me too faithful to compound epithets in the introductory lines, and I know his reason. He fears lest the English reader should blame Homer, whom he idolizes, though hardly more than I, for such constant repetition. But them I shall not alter. They are necessary to a just representation of the original. In the affair of Outis,* I shall throw him flat on his back by an unanswerable argument, which I shall give in a note, and with which I am furnished by Mrs. Unwin. So much for hypercriticism, which has run away with all my paper. This critic, by the way is, ——;† I know him by infallible indications.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, Feb. 22, 1793.

My dear Sir,—My eyes, which have long been inflamed, will hardly serve for Homer, and oblige me to make all my letters short. You have obliged me much, by sending me so speedily the remainder of your notes. I have begun with them again, and find them, as before, very much to the purpose. More to the purpose they could not have been, had you been poetry professor already. I rejoice sincerely in the prospect you have of that office, which, whatever may be your own thoughts of the matter, I am sure you will fill with great sufficiency. Would that my interest and power to serve you were greater! One string to my bow I have, and one only, which shall not be idle for want of my exertions. I thank you likewise for your very entertaining notices and remarks in the natural way. The hurry in which I write would not suffer me to send you many in return, had I many to send, but only two or three present themselves.

Frogs will feed on worms. I saw a frog gathering into his gullet an earth-worm as long as himself; it cost him time and labor, but at last he succeeded.

Mrs. Unwin and I, crossing a brook, saw from the foot-bridge somewhat at the bottom of the water which had the appearance of a flower. Observing it attentively, we found that it consisted of a circular assemblage of minnows; their heads all met in a centre, and their tails, diverging at equal distances, and being elevated above their heads, gave them the appearance of a flower half blown. One was longer than the rest, and as often as a straggler came in sight, he quitted his place to pursue him, and having driven him away, he returned to it again, and no other minnow offering to take it in his absence. This we saw him do several times. The object that had attached them all was a dead minnow, which they seemed to be devouring.

After a very rainy day, I saw on one of the flower borders what seemed a long hair, but it had a waving, twining motion. Considering more nearly, I found it alive, and endued with spontaneity, but could not discover at the ends of it either head or tail, or any distinction of parts. I carried it into the house, when the air of a warm room dried and killed it presently.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 24, 1793.

Your letter (so full of kindness and so exactly in unison with my own feelings for you) should have had, as it deserved to have, an earlier answer, had I not been perpetually tortured with inflamed eyes, which are a sad hindrance to me in everything. But, to make amends, if I do not send you an early answer, I send you at least a speedy one, being obliged to write as fast as my pen can trot, that I may shorten the time of poring upon paper as much as possible. Homer too has been another hindrance, for always when I can see, which is only about two hours every morning, and not at all by candle-light, I devote myself to him, being in haste to send him a second time to the press, that nothing may stand in the way of Milton. By the way, where are my dear Tom's remarks, which I long to have, and must have soon, or they will come too late?

Oh, you rogue! what would you give to have such a dream about Milton as I had about a week since? I dreamed that, being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking towards the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feel-

* A name given to Ulysses. † May.

ings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father,—such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with a complacence in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his Paradise Lost as every man must who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me when I first discovered it, being at that time a school-boy. He answered me by a smile, and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "Well, you for your part will do well also;" at last, recollecting his great age (for I understood him to be two hundred years old) I feared that I might fatigue him by too much talking, I took my leave, and he took his with an air of the most perfect good-breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus, may it not?*

How truly I rejoice that you have recovered Guy! That man won my heart the moment I saw him: give my love to him, and tell him I am truly glad he is alive again.

There is much sweetness in those lines from the sonneteer of Avon, and not a little in dear Tom's: an earnest, I trust, of good things to come!

With Mary's kind love, I must now conclude myself,

My dear brother, ever yours, LIPPUS.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, March 4, 1793.

My dear Friend,—Since I received your last I have been much indisposed, very blind, and very busy. But I have not suffered all these evils at one and the same time. While the winter lasted I was miserable with a fever on my spirits; when the spring began to approach I was seized with an inflammation in my eyes, and ever since I have been able to use them, have been employed in giving more last touches to Homer, who is on the point of going to press again.

Though you are Tory, I believe, and I am Whig, our sentiments concerning the madcaps of France are much the same. They are a terrible race, and I have a horror both of them and their principles.* Tacitus is certainly living now, and the quotations you sent me can be nothing but extracts from some letters of his to yourself.

Yours, most sincerely, W. C.

We have already mentioned the interest excited in Cowper's mind by a son of Hayley's, a youth of not more than twelve years of age, and of most promising talents. At Cowper's request he addressed to him the subjoined letter, containing criticisms on his Homer, which do honor to his taste and acuteness. The poet's reply may also be regarded as a proof of his kind condescension and amiable sweetness of temper.

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

Eartham, March 4, 1793.

Honored King of Bards,—Since you deign to demand the observations of an humble and inexperienced servant of yours, on a work of one who is so much his superior (as he is ever ready to serve you with all his might), behold what you demand! But let me desire you not to censure me for my unskilful and perhaps (as they will undoubtedly appear to you) ridiculous observations; but be so kind as to receive them as a mark of respectful affection from

Your obedient servant,
THOMAS HAYLEY.

Book.	Line.	
I.	184	I cannot reconcile myself to these
	195	expressions, "Ah cloth'd with impudence," &c., and "Shameless wolf," and "Face of flint."
	196	
I.	508	"Dishonor'd foul," is, in my opinion, an uncleanly expression.
I.	661	"Reel'd," I think makes it appear as if Olympus was drunk.
I.	749	"Kindler of the fires of Heaven," I think makes Jupiter appear too much like a lamplighter.
II.	317 to 319	These lines are, in my opinion, below the elevated genius of Mr. Cowper.
XVIII.	300	This appears to me to be rather Irish, since in line 300 you say, "No one sat," and in line 301, "Polydamus rose."

* Whether this is a poetical or real dream of Cowper's, we presume not to decide. It bears so strong a resemblance to Milton's vision of the Bishop of Winchester, (the celebrated Dr. Andrews,) as to suggest the probability of having been borrowed from that source. The passage is to be found in Milton's beautiful Latin elegy on the death of that prelate, and is thus translated by Cowper:

"While t that splendor, and the mingled shade
Of fruitful vines with wonder fixt survey'd,
At once, with looks, that beam'd celestial grace,
The seer of Winton stood before my face.
His snowy vesture's hem descending low
His golden sandals swept, and pure as snow
New-fallen shone the mitre on his brow.
Where'er he trod a tremulous sweet sound
Of gladness shook the flow'ry scene around:
Attendant angels clap their starry wings,
The trumpet shakes the sky, all æther rings,
Each chaunts his welcome, ...
Then night retired, and, chas'd by dawning day,
The visionary bliss pass'd all away:
I mourn'd my banish'd sleep with fond concern:
Frequent to me may dreams like this return."

* Louis XVI., the unhappy King of France, had recently perished on the scaffold, Jan. 21, 1793.

TO MR. THOMAS HAYLEY.

Weston, March 14, 1793.

My dear little Critic,—I thank you heartily for your observations, on which I set a higher value, because they have instructed me as much, and have entertained me more, than all the other strictures of our public judges in these matters. Perhaps I am not much more pleased with *shameless wolf*, &c., than you. But what is to be done, my little man? Coarse as the expressions are, they are no more than equivalent to those of Homer. The invective of the ancients was never tempered with good manners, as your papa can tell you; and my business, you know, is not to be more polite than my author, but to represent him as closely as I can.

Dishonor'd foul I have wiped away, for the reason you give, which is a very just one, and the present reading is this,

> Who had dared dishonor thus
> The life itself, &c.

Your objection to *kindler of the fires of heaven* I had the good fortune to anticipate, and expunged the dirty ambiguity some time since, wondering not a little that I had ever admitted it.

The fault you find with the two first verses of Nestor's speech discovers such a degree of just discernment that, but for your papa's assurance to the contrary, I must have suspected *him* as the author of that remark: much as I should have respected it, if it had been so, I value it, I assure you, my little friend, still more as yours. In the new edition the passage will be found thus altered:

> Alas! great sorrow falls on Greece to-day!
> Priam, and Priam's sons, with all in Troy—
> Oh! how will they exult, and in their hearts
> Triumph, once hearing of this broil between
> The prime of Greece, in council and in arms!

Where the word *reel* suggests to you the idea of a drunken mountain, it performs the service to which I destined it. It is a bold metaphor; but justified by one of the sublimest passages in scripture, compared with the sublimity of which even that of Homer suffers humiliation.

It is God himself who, speaking, I think, by the prophet Isaiah, says,

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard."*

With equal boldness in the same scripture, the poetry of which was never equalled, mountains are said to skip, to break out into singing, and the fields to clap their hands. I intend, therefore, that my Olympus shall be still tipsy.

The accuracy of your last remark, in which you convicted me of a bull, delights me. A fig for all critics but you! The blockheads could not find it. It shall stand thus:—

> First spake Polydamus——

Homer was more upon his guard than to commit such a blunder, for he says,

> ηρχ' ἀγορευειν.

And now, my dear little censor, once more accept my thanks. I only regret that your strictures are so few, being just and sensible as they are.

Tell your papa that he shall hear from me soon. Accept mine, and my dear invalid's affectionate remembrances.

Ever yours, W. C.

* Isaiah xxiv. 20.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, March 19, 1793.

My dear Hayley,—I am so busy every morning before breakfast (my only opportunity), strutting and stalking in Homeric stilts, that you ought to account it an instance of marvellous grace and favor, that I condescend to write even to you. Sometimes I am seriously almost crazed with the multiplicity of the matters before me, and the little or no time that I have for them; and sometimes I repose myself, after the fatigue of that distraction, on the pillow of despair; a pillow which has often served me in the time of need, and is become, by frequent use, if not very comfortable, at least convenient. So reposed, I laugh at the world, and say, "Yes, you may gape and expect both Homer and Milton from me, but I'll be hanged if ever you get them."

In Homer you must know I am advanced as far as the fifteenth book of the Iliad, leaving nothing behind me that can reasonably offend the most fastidious: and I design him for public appearance in his new dress as soon as possible, for a reason which any poet may guess, if he will but thrust his hand into his pocket.

You forbid me to tantalize you with an invitation to Weston, and yet you invite me to Eartham! No! no! there is no such happiness in store for me at present. Had I rambled at all, I was under promise to all my dear mother's kindred to go to Norfolk, and they are dying to see me: but I have told them that die they must, for I cannot go; and ergo, as you will perceive, can go nowhere else.

Thanks for Mazarin's epitaph!* It is full

* We have not been able to discover this epitaph, nor does it appear that it was ever translated by Cowper.

Cardinal Mazarin was minister of state to Louis XIII., and during the minority of Louis XIV. The last moments of this great statesman are too edifying not to be recorded. To the ecclesiastic (Joly) who attended him, he said, "I am not satisfied with my state: I wish to feel a more profound sorrow for my sins. I am a great sin-

of witty paradox, and is written with a force and severity which sufficiently bespeak the author. I account it an inestimable curiosity, and shall be happy when time shall serve, with your aid, to make a good translation of it. But that will be a stubborn business. Adieu! The clock strikes eight: and now for Homer.

W. C.

The two following letters bear an honorable testimony to his bookseller, Johnson, whom he had commissioned his friend, Mr. Rose, to consult respecting a second and revised edition of his Homeric version.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, March 27, 1793.

My dear Friend,—I must send you a line of congratulation on the event of your transaction with Johnson, since you, I know, partake with me in the pleasure I receive from it. Few of my concerns have been so happily concluded. I am now satisfied with my bookseller, as I have substantial cause to be, and account myself in good hands; a circumstance as pleasant to me as any other part of my business; for I love dearly to be able to confide, with all my heart, in those with whom I am connected, of what kind soever the connexion may be.

The question of printing or not printing the alterations seems difficult to decide. If they are not printed, I shall perhaps disoblige some purchasers of the first edition, and if they are, many others of them, perhaps a great majority, will never care about them. As far as I have gone, I have made a fair copy; and when I have finished the whole, will send them to Johnson, together with the interleaved volumes. He will see in a few minutes what it will be best to do, and by his judgment I shall be determined. The opinion to which I most incline is, that they ought to be printed separately, for they are many of them rather long, here and there a whole speech, or a whole simile, and the verbal and lineal variations are so numerous, that, altogether, I apprehend, they will give a new air to the work, and I hope a much improved one.

I forgot to say in the proper place, that some notes, although but very few, I have added already; and may perhaps see here and there opportunity for a few more. But, notes being little wanted, especially by people at all conversant with classical literature, as most readers of Homer are, I am persuaded that were they numerous, they would be deemed an incumbrance. I shall write to Johnson soon, perhaps to-morrow, and then shall say the same thing to him.

In point of health, we continue much the same. Our united love, and many thanks for your prosperous negotiations, attend yourself and whole family, and especially my little namesake. Adieu!

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Weston, March 29, 1793.

My dear Friend,—Your tidings concerning the slender pittance yet to come, are, as you observe, of the melancholy cast. Not being gifted by nature with the means of acquiring much, it is well, however, that she has given me a disposition to be contented with little. I have now been so many years habituated to small matters that I should probably find myself incommoded by greater; and may I but be enabled to shift, as I have been hitherto, unsatisfied wishes will never trouble me much. My pen has helped me somewhat: and, after some years' toil, I begin to reap the benefit. Had I begun sooner, perhaps I should have known fewer pecuniary distresses; or, who can say?—it is possible that I might not have succeeded so well. Fruit ripens only a short time before it rots; and man, in general, arrives not at maturity of mental powers at a much earlier period. I am now busied in preparing Homer for his second appearance. An author should consider himself as bound not to please himself, but the public; and as far as the good pleasure of the public may be learned from the critics, I design to accommodate myself to it. The Latinisms, though employed by Milton, and numbered by Addison among the arts and expedients by which he has given dignity to his style, I shall render into plain English; the rougher lines, though my reason for using them has never been proved a bad one, so far as I know, I shall make perfectly smooth; and shall give body and substance to all that is in any degree feeble and flimsy. And when I have done all this, and more, if the critics still grumble, I shall say the very deuce is in them. Yet, that they will grumble I

ner. I have no hope but in the mercy of God." (Je suis un grand criminel, je n'ai d'esperance qu'en la misericorde divine.) At another time he besought his confessor to treat him like the lowest subject in the realm, being convinced, he said, that there was but one gospel for the great, as well as for the little. (Qu'il n'y avait qu'un Evangile pour les grands, et pour les petits.)

His sufferings were very acute. "You see," he observed to those around him, "what infirmities and wretchedness the fortunes and dignities of this world come to." He repeated many times the Miserere, (Ps. li.) stretching forth his hands, then clasping them, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, with all the marks of the most sincere devotion.

At midnight he exclaimed, "I am dying—my mind grows indistinct. I trust in Jesus Christ." (Je vais bientôt mourir, mon jugement se trouble, j'espère en Jésus Christ.) Afterwards, frequently repeating the sacred name of Jesus, he expired. (Se mettant en devoir de répéter aussi fréquemment le très-saint nom de Jésus, il expira.)

Histoire du Card. Mazarin, par M. Aubery.

* Private correspondence.

make no doubt; for, unreasonable as it is to do so, they all require something better than Homer, and that something they will certainly never get from me.

As to the canal that is to be my neighbor, I hear little about it. The Courtenays of Weston have nothing to do with it, and I have no intercourse with Tyringham. When it is finished, the people of these parts will have to carry their coals seven miles only, which now they bring from Northampton or Bedford, both at the distance of fifteen. But, as Balaam says, who shall live when these things are done? It is not for me, a sexagenarian already, to expect that I shall. The chief objection to canals in general seems to be, that, multiplying as they do, they are likely to swallow the coasting trade.

I cannot tell you the joy I feel at the disappointment of the French: pitiful mimics of Spartan and Roman virtue, without a grain of it in their whole character.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, April 11, 1793.

My dearest Johnny,—The long muster-roll of my great and small ancestors I signed and dated, and sent up to Mr. Blue-mantle, on Monday, according to your desire. Such a pompous affair, drawn out for my sake, reminds me of the old fable of the mountain in parturition, and a mouse the produce. Rest undisturbed, say I, their lordly, ducal, and royal dust! Had they left me something handsome, I should have respected them more. But perhaps they did not know that such a one as I should have the honor to be numbered among their descendants.* Well! I have a little bookseller that makes me some amends for their deficiency. He has made me a present; an act of liberality which I take every opportunity to blazon, as it well deserves. But you, I suppose, have learned it already from Mr. Rose.

Fear not, my man. You will acquit yourself very well, I dare say, both in standing for your degree, and when you have gained it. A little tremor and a little shame-facedness in a stripling like you, are recommendations rather than otherwise; and so they ought to be, being symptoms of an ingenuous mind, rather unfrequent in this age of brass.

What you say of your determined purpose, with God's help, to take up the cross and despise the shame, gives us both real pleasure. In our pedigree is found one, at least, who did it before you.* Do you the like; and you will meet him in heaven, as sure as the scripture is the word of God.†

The quarrel that the world has with evangelic men and doctrines, they would have with a host of angels in the human form. For it is the quarrel of owls with sunshine; of ignorance with divine illumination.

Adieu, my dear Johnny! We shall expect you with earnest desire of your coming, and receive you with much delight.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, April 23, 1793.

My dear Friend and Brother,—Better late than never, and better a little than none at all! Had I been at liberty to consult my inclinations, I would have answered your truly kind and affectionate letter immediately. But I am the busiest man alive, and, when this epistle is despatched, you will be the only one of my correspondents to whom I shall not be indebted. While I write this, my poor Mary sits mute; which I cannot well bear, and which, together with want of time to write much, will have a curtailing effect on my epistle.

My only studying time is still given to Homer, not to correction and amendment of him (for that is all over) but to writing notes. Johnson has expressed a wish for some, that the unlearned may be a little illuminated concerning classical story and the mythology of the ancients: and his behavior to me has been so liberal, that I can refuse him nothing. Poking into the old Greek commentators blinds me. But if is no matter. I am the more like Homer.

Ever yours, my dearest Hayley,

W. C

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.‡

April 25, 1793.

My dear Friend,—Had it not been stipulated between us that, being both at present pretty much engrossed by business, we should write when opportunity offers, I should be frighted at the date of your last; but you will not judge me, I know, by the unfrequency of my letters; nor suppose that my thoughts about you are equally unfrequent.

* Cowper, according to his kinsman, was descended, by the maternal line, through the families of Hippesley of Throughley, in Sussex, and Pellet, of Bolney, in the same county, from the several noble houses of West, Knollys, Carey, Bullen, Howard, and Mowbray; and so by four different lines from Henry the Third, king of England. He justly adds, "Distinction of this nature can shed no additional lustre on the memory of Cowper; but genius, however exalted, disdains not, while it boasts not, the splendor of ancestry; and royalty itself may be flattered, and perhaps benefited, by discovering its kindred to such piety, such purity, such talents as his."—See *Sketch of the Life of Cowper, by Dr. Johnson.*

* Dr. Donne, formerly Dean of St. Paul's.

† "Be wiser thou—like our forefather Donne,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone."

‡ Private correspondence.

In truth, they are not. No day passes in which you are excluded from them. I am so busy that I do not expect even now to fill my paper. While I write, my poor invalid, who is still unable to muse herself either with book or needle, sits silent at my side; which makes me, in all my letters, hasten to a conclusion. My only time for study is now before breakfast; and I lengthen it as much as I can, by rising early.

I know not that, with respect to our health, we are either better or worse than when you saw us. Mrs. Unwin, perhaps, has gained a little strength; and the advancing spring, I hope, will add to it. As to myself, I am, in body, soul, and spirit, *semper idem*. Prayer, I know, is made for me, and sometimes with great enlargement of heart, by those who offer it; and in this circumstance consists the only evidence I can find, that God is still favorably mindful of me, and has not cast me off for ever.

A long time since, I received a parcel from Dr. Cogshall, of New York; and, looking on the reverse of the packing-paper, saw there an address to you. I conclude, therefore, that you received it first, and at his desire transmitted it to me; consequently you are acquainted with him, and, probably, apprised of the nature of our correspondence. About three years ago I had his first letter to me, which came accompanied by half a dozen American publications. He proposed an exchange of books on religious subjects, as likely to be useful on both sides of the water. Most of those he sent, however, I had seen before. I sent him, in return, such as I could get; but felt myself indifferently qualified for such a negotiation. I am now called upon to contribute my quota again; and shall be obliged to you if, in your next, you will mention the titles of half a dozen that may be procured at little cost, that are likely to be new in that country and useful.

About two months since, I had a letter from Mr. Jeremiah Waring, of Alton in Hampshire. Do you know such a man? I think I have seen his name in advertisements of mathematical works. He is, however, or seems to be, a very pious man.

I was a little surprised lately, seeing in the last Gentleman's Magazine a letter from somebody at Winchester, in which is a copy of the epitaph of our poor friend Unwin: an English, not a Latin one. It has been pleasant to me sometimes to think, that his dust lay under an inscription of my writing; which I had no reason to doubt, because the Latin one, which I composed at the request of the executors, was, as I understood from Mr. H. Thornton, accepted by them and approved. If they thought, after all, that an English one, as more intelligible, would therefore be preferable, I believe they judged wisely; but, having never heard that they had changed their mind about it, I was at a loss to account for the alteration.

So now, my dear friend, adieu!—When I have thanked you for a barrel of oysters, and added our united kind remembrances to yourself and Miss Catlett, I shall have exhausted the last moment that I can spare at present.

I remain sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, May 4, 1793.

My dear Friend,—While your sorrow for our common loss was fresh in your mind, I would not write, lest a letter on so distressing a subject should be too painful both to you and me; and now that I seem to have reached a proper time for doing it, the multiplicity of my literary business will hardly afford me leisure. Both you and I have this comfort when deprived of those we love—at our time of life we have every reason to believe that the deprivation cannot be long. Our sun is setting too, and when the hour of rest arrives we shall rejoin your brother, and many whom we have tenderly loved, our forerunners into a bettter country.

I will say no more on a theme which it will be better perhaps to treat with brevity; and because the introduction of any other might seem a transition too violent, I will only add that Mrs. Unwin and I are about as well as we at any time have been within the last year.

Truly yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

May 5, 1793.

My dear Friend,—My delay to answer your last kind letter, to which likewise you desired a speedy reply, must have seemed rather difficult to explain on any other supposition than that of illness; but illness has not been the cause, although, to say the truth, I cannot boast of having been lately very well. Yet has not this been the cause of my silence, but your own advice, very proper and earnestly given to me, to proceed in the revisal of Homer. To this it is owing, that, instead of giving an hour or two before breakfast to my correspondents, I allot that time entirely to my studies. I have nearly given the last touches to the poetry, and am now busied far more laboriously in writing notes at the request of my honest bookseller, transmitted to me in the first instance by you, and afterward repeated by himself. I am therefore, deep in the old Scholia, and have advanced to the latter part of Iliad nine, explaining, as I go, such passages as may be difficult to unlearned readers, and such only; for notes of

that kind are the notes that Johnson desired. I find it a more laborious task than the translation was, and shall be heartily glad when it is over. In the meantime, all the letters I receive remain unanswered, or, if they receive an answer, it is always a short one. Such this must be. Johnny is here, having flown over London.

Homer, I believe, will make a much more respectable appearance than before. Johnson now thinks it will be right to make a separate impression of the amendments.

W. C.

I breakfast every morning on seven or eight pages of the Greek commentators. For so much I am obliged to read in order to select perhaps three or four short notes for the readers of my translation.

Homer is indeed a tie upon me, that must not on any account be broken, till all his demands are satisfied; though I have fancied, while the revisal of the Odyssey was at a distance, that it would ask less labor in the finishing, it is not unlikely, that, when I take it actually in hand, I may find myself mistaken. Of this at least I am sure, that uneven verse abounds much more in it than it once did in the Iliad; yet to the latter the critics objected on that account, though to the former never; perhaps because they had not read it. Hereafter they shall not quarrel with me on that score. The Iliad is now all smooth turnpike, and I will take equal care, that there shall be no jolts in the Odyssey.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 7, 1793.

My dearest Coz.,—You have thought me long silent, and so have many others. In fact I have not for many months written punctually to any but yourself and Hayley. My time, the little I have, is so engrossed by Homer, that I have at this moment a bundle of unanswered letters by me, and letters likely to be so. Thou knowest, I dare say, what it is to have a head weary with thinking. Mine is so fatigued by breakfast time, three days out of four, I am utterly incapable of sitting down to my desk again for any purpose whatever.

I am glad I have convinced thee at last that thou art a Tory. Your friend's definition of Whig and Tory must be just, for aught I know, as far as the latter are concerned; but respecting the former, I think him mistaken. There is no TRUE Whig who wishes all power in the hands of his own party. The division of it which the lawyers call tripartite is exactly what he desires; and he would have neither king, lords, nor commons unequally trusted, or in the smallest degree predominant. Such a Whig am I, and such Whigs are the true friends of the constitution.

Adieu! my dear; I am dead with weariness.

W. C.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

May 17, 1793.

Dear Sir,—It has not been without frequent self-reproach that I have so long omitted to answer your last very kind and most obliging letter. I am by habit and inclination extremely punctual in the discharge of such arrears, and it is only through necessity, and under constraint of various indispensable engagements of a different kind, that I am become of late much otherwise.

I have never seen Chapman's translation of Homer, and will not refuse your offer of it, unless, by accepting it, I shall deprive you of a curiosity that you cannot easily replace.* The line or two which you quote from him, except that the expression of "a well-written soul" has the quaintness of his times in it, do him credit. He cannot surely be the same Chapman who wrote a poem, I think, on the battle of Hochstadt, in which, when I was a very young man, I remember to have seen the following lines:

"Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,
And each man mounted on his capering beast.
Into the Danube they were push'd by shoals," &c.

These are lines that could not fail to impress the memory, though not altogether in the Homerican style of battle.

I am, as you say, a hermit, and probably an irreclaimable one, having a horror of London that I cannot express, nor indeed very easily account for. Neither am I much less disinclined to migration in general. I did no little violence to my love of home last summer, when I paid Mr. Hayley a visit, and in truth was principally induced to the journey by a hope that it might be useful to Mrs. Unwin; who, however, derived so little benefit from it, that I purpose for the future to avail myself of the privilege my years may reasonably claim, by compelling my younger friends to visit *me*. But even this is a point which I cannot well compass at present, both because I am too busy, and because poor Mrs. Unwin is not able to bear the fatigue of company. Should better days arrive, days

* Chapman claims the honor of being the first translator of the whole of the works of Homer. He was born in 1557, and was the contemporary of Shakspeare, Spenser, Jonson, &c. His version of the Iliad was dedicated to Henry, Prince of Wales. He also translated Musæus and Hesiod, and was the author of many other works. He died in 1634, aged seventy-seven. His version of Homer is now obsolete, and rendered tedious by the protracted measure of fourteen syllables; though occasionally it exhibits much spirit. Waller, according to Dryden, could never read his version without emotion, and Pope found it worthy of his particular attention.

of more leisure to me, and of some health to her, I shall not fail to give you notice of the change, and shall then hope for the pleasure of seeing you at Weston.

The epitaph you saw is on the tomb of the same Mr. Unwin to whom the "Tirocinium" is inscribed; the son of the lady above mentioned. By the desire of his executors I wrote a Latin one, which they approved, but it was not approved by a relation of the deceased, and therefore was not used. He objected to the mention I had made in it of his mother having devoted him to the service of God in his infancy. She did it, however, and not in vain, as I wrote in my epitaph. Who wrote the English one I know not.

The poem called the "Slave" is not mine, nor have I ever seen it. I wrote two on the subject—one entitled "The Negro's Complaint," and the other "The Morning Dream." With thanks for all your kindness, and the patience you have with me,

I remain, dear sir,
Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, May 21, 1793.

My dear Brother.—You must either think me extremely idle, or extremely busy, that I have made your last very kind letter wait so very long for an answer. The truth however is, that I am neither; but have had time enough to have scribbled to you, had I been able to scribble at all. To explain this riddle I must give you a short account of my proceedings.

I rise at six every morning and fag till near eleven, when I breakfast. The consequence is, that I am so exhausted as not to be able to write when the opportunity offers. You will say—"Breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you." I answer—"Perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I cannot spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study." This uneasiness of which I complain is a proof that I am somewhat stricken in years: and there is no other cause by which I can account for it, since I go early to bed, always between ten and eleven, and seldom fail to sleep well. Certain it is, ten years ago I could have done as much, and sixteen years ago did actually much more, without suffering fatigue or any inconvenience from my labors. How insensibly old age steals on, and how often is it actually arrived before we suspect it! Accident alone, some occurrence that suggests a comparison of our former with our present selves, affords the discovery. Well! it is always good to be undeceived, especially on an article of such importance.

There has been a book lately published, entitled "Man as he is." I have heard a high character of it, as admirably written, and am informed, that for that reason, and because it inculcates Whig principles, it is by many imputed to you. I contradict this report, assuring my informant, that had it been yours, I must have known it, for that you have bound yourself to make me your father-confessor on all such wicked occasions, and not to conceal from me even a murder, should you happen to commit one.*

I will not trouble you, at present, to send me any more books with a view to my notes on Homer. I am not without hopes that Sir John Throckmorton, who is expected here from Venice in a short time, may bring me Villoison's edition of the Odyssey. He certainly will, if he found it published, and that alone will be *instar omnium*.

Adieu, my dearest brother! Give my love to Tom, and thank him for his book, of which I believe I need not have deprived him, intending that my readers shall detect the occult instruction contained in Homer's stories for themselves. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, June 1, 1793.

My dearest Cousin,—You will not (you say) come to us now; and you tell us not when you will. These assignations, *sine die*, are such shadowy things that I can neither grasp nor get any comfort from them. Know you not that hope is the next best thing to enjoyment? Give us then a hope, and a determinate time for that hope to fix on, and we will endeavor to be satisfied.

Johnny is gone to Cambridge, called thither to take his degree, and is much missed by me. He is such an active little fellow in my service, that he cannot be otherwise. In three weeks, however, I shall hope to have him again for a fortnight. I have had a letter from him, containing an incident which has given birth to the following.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,†

ON HIS ARRIVAL AT CAMBRIDGE WET, WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE.

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refreshed the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the Church, endow'd,
With heavenly gifts, to heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favors from on high,
Thy locks were wet when other locks were dry.
Heav'n grant us half the omen! may we see,
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

These are spick and span. Johnny him-

* The real author was Robert Bage.
† The poet's kinsman.

self has not yet seen them. By the way, he has filled your book completely; and I will give thee a guinea if thou wilt search thy old book for a couple of songs and two or three other pieces, of which I know thou madest copies at the vicarage, and which I have lost. The songs I know are pretty good, and I would fain recover them. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, June 6, 1793.

My dear Sir,—I seize a passing moment merely to say that I feel for your distresses, and sincerely pity you, and I shall be happy to learn from your next, that your sister's amendment has superseded the necessity you feared of a journey to London. Your candid account of the effect that your afflictions have both on your spirits and temper I can perfectly understand, having labored much in that fire myself, and perhaps more than any man. It is in such a school, however, that we must learn if we ever truly learn it, the natural depravity of the human heart, and of our own in particular; together with the consequence that necessarily follows such wretched premises; our indispensable need of the atonement, and our inexpressible obligations to Him who made it. This reflection cannot escape a thinking mind, looking back to those ebullitions of fretfulness and impatience to which it has yielded in a season of great affliction.

Having lately had company, who left us only on the 4th, I have done nothing—nothing indeed, since my return from Sussex, except a trifle or two, which it was incumbent upon me to write. Milton hangs in doubt: neither spirits nor opportunity suffice me for that labor. I regret continually that I ever suffered myself to be persuaded to undertake it. The most that I hope to effect is a complete revisal of my own Homer. Johnson told my friend, who has just left me, that it will begin to be reviewed in the next *Analytical*, and he *hoped* the review of it would not offend me. By this I understand, that if I am not offended it will be owing more to my own equanimity than to the mildness of the critic. So be it! He will put an opportunity of victory over myself into my hands, and I will endeavor not to lose it.

Adieu! W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

June 12, 1793.

My dear Friend,—You promise to be contented with a short line, and a short one you must have, hurried over in the little interval I have happened to find between the conclusion of my morning task and breakfast. Study has this good effect, at least: it makes me an early riser, who might otherwise, perhaps, be as much given to dozing as my readers.

The scanty opportunity I have, I shall employ in telling you what you principally wish to be told—the present state of mine and Mrs. Unwin's health. In her I cannot perceive any alteration for the better; and must be satisfied, I believe, as indeed I have great reason to be, if she does not alter for the worse. She uses the orchard-walk daily, but always supported between two, and is still unable to employ herself as formerly. But she is cheerful, seldom in much pain, and has always strong confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of God.

As to myself, I have always the same song to sing—Well in body, but sick in spirit; sick, nigh unto death.

> Seasons return, but not to me returns
> God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
> Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
> Or joy, or hope, or Jesus's face divine;
> But cloud, &c.

I could easily set my complaint to Milton's tone, and accompany him through the whole passage,* on the subject of a blindness more deplorable than his; but time fails me.

I feel great desire to see your intended publication; a desire which the manner in which Mr. Bull speaks of it, who called here lately, has no tendency to allay. I believe I forgot to thank you for your last poetical present; not because I was not much pleased with it, but I write always in a hurry, and in a hurry must now conclude myself, with our united love,

Yours, my dear friend,
Most sincerely, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 29, 1793.

Dear architect of fine CHATEAUX in air
Worthier to stand forever if they could,
Than many built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear!

Oh for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware.

But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth
To drudge, in descant dry,† on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise?

That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

What remains for me to say on this subject, my dear brother bard, I will say in prose.

* Private correspondence.

* Paradise lost, Book III.

† He alludes to his notes on Homer.

There are other impediments which I could not comprise within the bounds of a sonnet.

My poor Mary's infirm condition makes it impossible for me, at present, to engage in a work such as you propose. My thoughts are not sufficiently free, nor have I, nor can I, by any means, find opportunity; added to it comes a difficulty which, though you are not at all aware of it, presents itself to me under a most forbidding appearance. Can you guess it? No, not you; neither perhaps will you be able to imagine that such a difficulty can possibly subsist. If your hair begins to bristle, stroke it down again, for there is no need why it should erect itself. It concerns me, not you. I know myself too well not to know that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner, and alone, and unconnected in my operations. This is not owing to want of love for you, my brother, or the most consummate confidence in you; for I have both in a degree that has not been exceeded in the experience of any friend you have, or ever had. But I am so made up—I will not enter into a metaphysical analysis of my strange composition, in order to detect the true cause of this evil; but on a general view of the matter, I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness which has been my effectual and almost fatal hindrance on many other important occasions, and which I should feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me. No! I shall neither do, nor attempt anything of consequence more, unless my poor Mary get better; nor even then, unless it should please God to give me another nature, in concert with any man—I could not, even with my own father or brother, were they now alive. Small game must serve me at present, and till I have done with Homer and Milton, a sonnet, or some such matter, must content me. The utmost that I aspire to, and Heaven knows with how feeble a hope, is to write at some better opportunity, and when my hands are free, "The Four Ages." Thus I have opened my heart unto thee.* W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 7, 1793.

My dearest Hayley,—If the excessive heat of this day, which forbids me to do anything else, will permit me to scribble to you, I shall rejoice. To do this is a pleasure to me at all times, but to do it now, a double one; because I am in haste to tell you how much I am delighted with your projected quadruple alliance, and to assure you, that if it please God to afford me health, spirits, ability, and leisure, I will not fail to devote them all to the production of my quota of "The Four Ages."*

You are very kind to humor me as you do, and had need be a little touched yourself with all my oddities, that you may know how to administer to mine. All whom I love do so, and I believe it to be impossible to love heartily those who do not. People must not do me good in *their* way, but in my *own*, and then they do me good indeed. My pride, my ambition, and my friendship for you, and the interest I take in my own dear self, will all be consulted and gratified by an arm-in-arm appearance with you in public; and I shall work with more zeal and assiduity at Homer, and, when Homer is finished at Milton, with the prospect of such a coalition before me. But what shall I do with a multitude of small pieces, from which I intended to select the best, and adding them to "The Four Ages," to have made a volume? Will there be room for them upon your plan? I have re-touched them, and will re-touch them again. Some of them will suggest pretty devices to designer: and, in short, I have a desire not to lose them.

I am at this moment, with all the imprudence natural to poets, expending nobody knows what, in embellishing my premises, or rather the premises of my neighbor Courtenay, which is more poetical still. I have built one summer-house already, with the boards of my old study, and am building another, spick and span, as they say. I have also a stone-cutter now at work, setting a bust of my dear old Grecian on a pedestal; and besides all this I meditate still more that is to be done in the autumn. Your project therefore is most opportune, as any project must needs be that has so direct a tendency to put money into the pocket of one so likely to want it.

Ah brother poet! send me of your shade,
And bid the zephyrs hasten to my aid!
Or, like a worm unearth'd at noon, I go,
Despatch'd by sunshine, to the shades below.

My poor Mary is as well as the heat will allow her to be: and whether it be cold or sultry, is always affectionately mindful of you and yours. W. C.

It is due to the memory of my reverend friend and brother-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Johnson, to state that Cowper was indebted to his ever-watchful and affectionate kindness for what he here calls his "dear old Grecian."

* What the proposed literary partnership was, which Hayley suggested, we know not; it is evident that it was not the poem of "The Four Ages," which forms the subject of the following letter, and in which Cowper acquiesced.

* Hayley made a second proposition to unite with Cowper in the projected poem of "The Four Ages," and to engage the aid of two distinguished artists, who were to embellish the work with appropriate designs. We believe that Lawrence and Flaxman were the persons to whom Hayley refers. We cannot sufficiently regret the failure of this plan, which would have enriched literature and art with so happy a specimen of poetical and professional talent. But the period was unhappily approaching which was to suspend the fine powers of Cowper's mind, and to shroud them in the veil of darkness.

With that amiable solicitude which formed so prominent a feature in his character, and which was always seeking how to please and to confer a favor, he had contrived to procure an antique bust of Homer, to gratify Cowper's partiality for his favorite bard. No present could possibly have been more acceptable or appropriate. We cannot avoid remarking, on this occasion, that, to anticipate a want and to supply it, to know how to minister to the gratification of another, and to enhance the gift by the grace of bestowing it, is one of the great arts of social and domestic life. It is not the amount, nor the intrinsic value of the favor, for the power of giving must in that case be restricted to the few. To give royally requires not only an enlarged heart, but ample and enlarged means. t is the appropriateness of the time and the occasion, the grace of the manner, and the unobtrusiveness of its character, that constitutes the value of the gift and endears the giver.

Cowper recorded his gratitude by the following poetical tribute, which has always been justly admired:—

Kinsman belov'd, and as a son by me!
When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
The sculptur'd form of my old fav'rite bard!
I rev'rence feel for him, and love for thee.
Joy too, and grief! much joy that there should be
Wise men, and learn'd who grudge not to reward
With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
Which others scorn: critics by courtesy!

The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine,
I lose my precious years, now soon to fail!
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross when balanc'd in the Christian scale!
Be wiser thou!—like our forefather Donne,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone!

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

W. U., July 15, 1793.

Dear Sir,—Within these few days I have received, by favor of Miss Knapps, your acceptable present of Chapman's translation of the Iliad. I know not whether the book be a rarity, but a curiosity it certainly is. I have as yet seen but little of it; enough, however, to make me wonder that any man, with so little taste for Homer, or apprehension of his manner, should think it worth while to undertake the laborious task of translating him: the hope of pecuniary advantage may perhaps account for it.* His information I fear, was not much better than his verse, for I have consulted him in one passage of some difficulty, and find him giving a sense of his own, not at all warranted by the words of Homer. Pope sometimes does this, and sometimes omits the difficult part entirely. I can boast of having done neither, though it has cost me infinite pains to exempt myself from the necessity.

I have seen a translation by Hobbes, which I prefer for its greater clumsiness. Many years have passed since I saw it, but it made me laugh immoderately. Poetry that is not good can only make amends for that deficiency by being ridiculous; and, because the translation of Hobbes has at least this recommendation, I shall be obliged to you, should it happen to fall in your way, if you would be so kind as to procure it for me. The only edition of it I ever saw (and perhaps there never was another*), was a very thick 12mo., both print and paper bad; a sort of book that would be sought in vain, perhaps, anywhere but on a stall.

When you saw Lady Hesketh, you saw the relation of mine with whom I have been more intimate, even from childhood, than any other. She has seen much of the world, understands it well, and, having great natural vivacity, is of course one of the most agreeable companions.

I have now arrived almost at a close of my labors on the Iliad, and have left nothing behind me, I believe, which I shall wish to alter on any future occasion. In about a fortnight or three weeks I shall begin to do the same for the Odyssey, and hope to be able to perform it while the Iliad is in printing. Then Milton will demand all my attention, and when I shall find opportunity either to revise your MSS., or to write a poem of my own,† which I have in contemplation, I can hardly say. Certainly not till both these tasks are accomplished.

I remain, dear sir,
With many thanks for your kind present,
Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

Weston, July 25, 1793.

My dear Madam,—Many reasons concurred to make me impatient for the arrival of your most acceptable present,‡ and among them was the fear lest you should perhaps suspect me of tardiness in acknowledging so great a favor; a fear, that, as often as it prevailed, distressed me exceedingly. At length I have received it, and my little bookseller assures

* Chapman's version is thus described by Warton: he "frequently retrenches or impoverishes what he could not feel and express," and yet is "not always without strength and spirit." By Anton, in his Philosophical Satires, published in 1616, he is characterised as

"Greeke-thund'ring Chapman, beaten to the age,
With a deepe furie and a sudden rage."

The testimony of Bishop Percy is flattering. "Had Chapman," he observes, "translated the Iliad into blank verse, it had been one of our chief classic performances."

* Cowper is mistaken in this supposition. Wood, in his Athenæ, records an edition of the Iliad in 1675; and of the Odyssey in 1667, and there was a re-impression of both in 1686.

† The Four Ages.

‡ The poem of the Emigrants, which was dedicated to Cowper.

me, that he sent it the very day he got it; by some mistake, however, the wagon brought it instead of the coach, which occasioned the delay.

It came this morning, about an hour ago; consequently I have not had time to peruse the poem, though you may be sure I have found enough for the perusal of the dedication. I have, in fact, given it three readings, and in each have found increasing pleasure.

I am a whimsical creature: when I write for the public, I write of course with a desire to please; in other words, to acquire fame, and I labor accordingly, but when I find that I have succeeded, feel myself alarmed, and ready to shrink from the acquisition.

This I have felt more than once: and when I saw my name at the head of your dedication, I felt it again; but the consummate delicacy of your praise soon convinced me that I might spare my blushes, and that the demand was less upon my modesty than my gratitude. Of that be assured, dear madam, and of the truest esteem and respect of your most obliged and affectionate humble servant, W. C.

P. S. I should have been much grieved to have let slip this opportunity of thanking you for your charming sonnets, and my two most agreeable old friends, Monimia and Orlando.*

TO THE REV. MR. GREATHEED.

Weston, July 27, 1793.

I was not without some expectation of a line from you, my dear sir, though you did not promise me one at your departure, and am happy not to have been disappointed: still happier to learn that you and Mrs. Greatheed are well, and so delightfully situated. Your kind offer to us of sharing with you the house which you at present inhabit, added to the short, but lively, description of the scenery that surrounds it, wants nothing to win our acceptance, should it please God to give Mrs. Unwin a little more strength, and should I ever be master of my time so as to be able to gratify myself with what would please me most. But many have claims upon us, and some who cannot absolutely be said to have any would yet complain and think themselves slighted, should we prefer rocks and caves to them. In short, we are called so many ways, that these numerous demands are likely to operate as a *remora*, and to keep us fixed at home. Here we can occasionally have the pleasure of yours and Mrs. Greatheed's company, and to have it here must I believe content us. Hayley in his last letter gives me reason to expect the pleasure of seeing him and his dear boy Tom, in the autumn. He will use all his eloquence to draw us to Eartham again. My cousin Johnny, of Norfolk, holds me under promise to make my first trip thither, and the very same promise I have hastily made to visit Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, at Bucklands. How to reconcile such clashing promises, and give satisfaction to all, would puzzle me, had I nothing else to do; and therefore, as I say, the result will probably be, that we shall find ourselves obliged to go nowhere, since we cannot everywhere.

. . . . .

Wishing you both safe at home again, and to see you as soon as may be here,

I remain,

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 27, 1793.

I have been vexed with myself, my dearest brother, and with everything about me, not excepting even Homer himself, that I have been obliged so long to delay an answer to your last kind letter. If I listen any longer to calls another way, I shall hardly be able to tell you how happy we are in the hope of seeing you in the autumn, and before the autumn will have arrived. Thrice welcome will you and your dear boy be to us, and the longer you will afford us your company, the more welcome. I have set up the head of Homer on a famous fine pedestal, and a very majestic appearance he makes. I am now puzzled about a motto, and wish you to decide for me between two, one of which I have composed myself, a Greek one, as follows:

Εικονα τις ταυτην ; κλυτον ανερος ουνομ' ολωλεν·
Ουνομα δ'ουτος ανηρ αφθιτον αιεν εχει.

The other is my own translation of a passage in the Odyssey, the original of which I have seen used as a motto to an engraved head of Homer many a time.

The present edition of the lines stands thus:

Him partially the muse
And dearly loved, yet gave him good and ill:
She quench'd his sight, and gave him strains divine.

Tell me, by the way, (if you ever had any speculations on the subject,) what is it you

* Mrs. Charlotte Smith is well known as an authoress, and particularly for her beautiful sonnets. She was formerly a great eulogist of the French Revolution, but the horrors which distinguished that political era led to a change in her sentiments which she publicly avowed in her "Banished Man." There is a great plaintiveness of feeling in all her writings, arising from the unfortunate incidents of her chequered life. We remember this lady, with her family, formerly resident at Oxford, where she excited much interest by her talents and misfortunes.

suppose Homer to have meant in particular, when he ascribed his blindness to the muse, for that he speaks of himself under the name of Demodocus, in the eighth book, I believe is by all admitted. How could the old bard study himself blind, when books were either so few or none at all? And did he write his poems? If neither were the cause, as seems reasonable to imagine, how could he incur his blindness by such means as could be justly imputable to the muse? Would mere thinking blind him? I want to know:

"Call up some spirit from the vasty deep!"

I said to my Sam* ——, "Sam, build me a shed in the garden, with anything that you can find, and make it rude and rough, like one of those at Eartham."——"Yes, Sir," says Sam, and straightway laying his own noddle, and the carpenter's noddle together, has built me a thing fit for Stow Gardens. Is not this vexatious?——I threaten to inscribe it thus:

Beware of building! I intended
Rough logs and thatch, and thus it ended.

But my Mary says, I shall break Sam's heart and the carpenter's too, and will not consent to it. Poor Mary sleeps but ill. How have you lived who cannot bear a sunbeam? Adieu!

My dearest Hayley, W. C.

The following seasonable and edifying letter, addressed by Cowper to his beloved kinsman, on the occasion of his ordination, will be read with interest.

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.†

August 2, 1793.

My dearest Johnny,—The bishop of Norwich has won my heart by his kind and liberal behavior to you; and, if I knew him, I would tell him so.

I am glad that your auditors find your voice strong and your utterance distinct; glad, too, that your doctrine has hitherto made you no enemies. You have a gracious Master, who, it seems, will not suffer you to see war in the beginning. It will be a wonder, however, if you do not, sooner or later, find out that sore place in every heart, which can ill endure the touch of apostolic doctrine. Somebody will smart in his conscience, and you will hear of it. I say not this, my dear Johnny, to terrify, but to prepare you for that which is likely to happen, and which, troublesome as it may prove, is yet devoutly to be wished; for, in general, there is little good done by preachers till the world begins to abuse them. But understand me aright. I do not mean that you should give them unnecessary provocation, by scolding and railing at them, as some, more zealous than wise, are apt to do. That were to deserve their anger. No; there is no need of it. The self-abasing doctrines of the gospel will, of themselves, create you enemies; but remember this, for your comfort—they will also, in due time, transform them into friends, and make them love you, as if they were your own children. God give you many such; as, if you are faithful to his cause, I trust he will!

Sir John and Lady Throckmorton have lately arrived in England, and are now at the Hall. They have brought me from Rome a set of engravings on Odyssey subjects, by Flaxman, whom you have heard Hayley celebrate. They are very fine, very much in the antique style, and a present from the Dowager Lady Spencer.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Aug. 11, 1793.

My dearest Cousin,—I am glad that my poor and hasty attempts to express some little civility to Miss Fansbaw and the amiable Count,* have your and her approbation. The lines addressed to her were not what I would have made them, but lack of time, a lack which always presses me, would not suffer me to improve them. Many thanks for her letter, which, were my merits less the subject of it, I should without scruple say is an excellent one. She writes with the force and accuracy of a person skilled in more languages than are spoken in the present day, as I doubt not that she is. I perfectly approve the theme she recommends to me, but am at present so totally absorbed in Homer, that all I do beside is ill done, being hurried over; and I would not execute ill a subject of her recommending.

I shall watch the walnuts with more attention than they who eat them, which I do in some hope, though you do not expressly say so, that when their threshing time arrives, we shall see you here. I am now going to paper my new study, and in a short time it will be fit to inhabit.

Lady Spencer has sent me a present from Rome, by the hands of Sir John Throckmorton, engravings of Odyssey subjects, after figures by Flaxman,† a statuary at present resident there, of high repute, and much a friend of Hayley's.

Thou livest, my dear, I acknowledge, in a very fine country, but they have spoiled it by building London in it.

Adieu, W. C.

* Samuel Roberts, his faithful servant.
† Private correspondence.

* Count Gravina, the Spanish Admiral.
† These illustrations are executed in outline, and form one of the most beautiful and elegant specimens of professional art.

That the allusion in the former part of the letter may be better understood, it is necessary to state, that Lady Hesketh had lent a manuscript poem of Cowper's to her friend Miss Fanshaw, with an injunction that she should neither show it nor take a copy. This promise was violated, and the reason assigned is expressed by the young lady in the following verses.

What wonder! if my wavering hand
Had dared to disobey,
When Hesketh gave a harsh command,
And Cowper led astray?

Then take this tempting gift of thine,
By pen uncopied yet;
But, canst thou memory confine,
Or teach me to forget?

More lasting than the touch of art
The characters remain,
When written by a feeling heart
On tablets of the brain.

COWPER'S REPLY.

To be remembered thus is fame,
And in the first degree;
And did the few like her the same,
The press might rest for me.

So Homer, in the memory stored
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,
But never lodged so well.

We add the verses addressed to Count Gravina, whom Cowper calls "the amiable Count," and who had translated the well-known stanzas on the Rose* into Italian verse.

My Rose, Gravina, blooms anew,
And, steep'd not now in rain,
But in Castalian streams by you,
Will never fade again.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 15, 1793.

Instead of a pound or two, spending a mint
Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint,
That building, and building, a man may be driven
At last out of doors, and have no house to live in.

Besides, my dearest brother, they have not only built for me what I did not want, but have ruined a notable tetrastic by doing so. I had written one which I designed for a hermitage, and it will by no means suit the fine and pompous affair which they have made instead of one. So that, as a poet, I am every way afflicted; made poorer than I need have been, and robbed of my verses: what case can be more deplorable?†

You must not suppose me ignorant of what Flaxman has done, or that I have not seen it, or that I am not actually in possession of it, at least of the engravings which you mention. In fact, I have had them more than a fortnight. Lady Dowager Spencer, to whom I inscribed my Odyssey, and who was at Rome when Sir John Throckmorton was there, charged him with them as a present to me, and arriving here lately he executed his commission. Romney, I doubt not, is right in his judgment of them; he is an artist himself, and cannot easily be mistaken; and I take his opinion as an oracle, the rather because it coincides exactly with my own. The figures are highly classical, antique, and elegant; especially that of Penelope, who, whether she wakes or sleeps, must necessarily charm all beholders.

Your scheme of embellishing my Odyssey with these plates is a kind one, and the fruit of your benevolence to me; but Johnson, I fear, will hardly stake so much money as the cost would amount to, on a work, the fate of which is at present uncertain. Nor could we adorn the Odyssey in this splendid manner, unless we had similar ornaments to bestow on the Iliad. Such, I presume, are not ready, and much time must elapse even if Flaxman should accede to the plan, before he could possibly prepare them. Happy indeed should I be to see a work of mine so nobly accompanied, but, should that good fortune ever attend me, it cannot take place till the third or fourth edition shall afford the occasion. This I regret, and I regret too that you will have seen them before I can have an opportunity to show them to you. Here is sixpence for you if you will abstain from the sight of them while you are in London.

The sculptor?—nameless, though once dear to fame:
But this man bears an everlasting name.*

So I purpose it shall stand; and on the pedestal, when you come, in that form you will find it. The added line from the Odyssey is charming, but the assumption of sonship to Homer seems too daring; suppose it stood thus:

Ὡς δε παις τω πατρι, και ουποτε λησομαι αυτου.

I am not sure that this would be clear of the same objection, and it departs from the text still more.

With my poor Mary's best love and our united wishes to see you here,

I remain, my dearest brother,
Ever yours, W. C.

* "The rose had been washed, just washed in a shower,"&c.

† The lines here alluded to are entitled, "Inscription for an Hermitage;" and are as follow:—

This cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
Built as it has been in our waning years,
A rest afforded to our weary feet,
Preliminary to—the last retreat.

* A translation of Cowper's Greek verses on his bust of Homer.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Aug. 20, 1793.

My dearest Catharina is too reasonable, I know, to expect news from me, who live on the outside of the world, and know nothing that passes within it. The best news is, that, though you are gone, you are not gone forever, as once I supposed you were, and said that we should probably meet no more. Some news however we have: but then I conclude that you have already received it from the Doctor, and that thought almost deprives me of all courage to relate it. On the evening of the feast, Bob Archer's house affording, I suppose, the best room for the purpose, all the lads and lasses who felt themselves disposed to dance, assembled there. Long time they danced, at least long time they did something a little like it, when at last the company having retired, the fiddler asked Bob for a lodging; Bob replied—"that his beds were all full of his own family, but if he chose it he would show him a hay-cock, where he might sleep as sound as in any bed whatever."—So forth they went together, and when they reached the place, the fiddler knocked down Bob, and demanded his money. But, happily for Bob, though he might be knocked down, and actually was so, yet he could not possibly be robbed, having nothing. The fiddler, therefore, having amused himself, with kicking him and beating him, as he lay, as long as he saw good, left him, and has never been heard of since, nor inquired after indeed, being no doubt the last man in the world whom Bob wishes to see again.

By a letter from Hayley, to-day, I learn, that Flaxman, to whom we are indebted for those Odyssey figures which Lady Frog brought over, has almost finished a set for the Iliad also. I should be glad to embellish my Homer with them, but neither my bookseller, nor I, shall probably choose to risk so expensive an ornament on a work, whose reception with the public is at present doubtful.

Adieu, my dearest Catharina. Give my best love to your husband. Come home as soon as you can, and accept our united very best wishes. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 22, 1793.

My dear Friend,—I rejoice that you have had so pleasant an excursion, and have beheld so many beautiful scenes. Except the delightful Upway, I have seen them all. I have lived much at Southampton, have slept and caught a sore throat at Lyndhurst, and have swum in the bay of Weymouth. It will give us great pleasure to see you here, should your business give you an opportunity to finish your excursions of this season with one to Weston.

As for my going on, it is much as usual. I rise at six; an industrious and wholesome practice from which I have never swerved since March. I breakfast generally about eleven—have given the intermediate time to my old delightful bard. Villoisson no longer keeps me company; I therefore now jog along with Clarke and Barnes at my elbow, and from the excellent annotations of the former, select such as I think likely to be useful, or that recommend themselves by the amusement they may afford: of which sorts there are not a few. Barnes also affords me some of both kinds, but not so many, his notes being chiefly paraphrastical or grammatical, my only fear is, lest between them both I should make my work too voluminous.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 27, 1793.

I thank you, my dear brother, for consulting the Gibbonian oracle on the question concerning Homer's muse and his blindness. I proposed it likewise to my little neighbor Buchanan, who gave me precisely the same answer. I felt an insatiable thirst to learn something new concerning him, and, despairing of information from others, was willing to hope, that I had stumbled on matter unnoticed by the commentators, and might, perhaps, acquire a little intelligence from himself. But the great and the little oracle together have extinguished that hope, and I despair now of making any curious discoveries about him.

Since Flaxman (which I did not know till your letter told me so) has been at work for the Iliad, as well as the Odyssey, it seems a great pity that the engravings should not be bound up with some Homer or other; and, as I said before, I should have been too proud to have bound them up in mine. But there is an objection, at least such it seems to me, that threatens to disqualify them for such a use, namely, the shape and size of them, which are such, that no book of the usual form could possibly receive them, save in a folded state, which, I apprehend, would be to murder them.

The monument of Lord Mansfield, for which you say he is engaged, will (I dare say) prove a noble effort of genius.* Statuaries, as I have heard an eminent one say, do not much trouble themselves about a likeness: else I would give much to be able to communicate to Flaxman the perfect idea that I have of the subject, such as he was forty years ago. He was at that time wonderfully handsome, and would expound the

* The celebrated monument in Westminster Abbey.

most mysterious intricacies of the law, or recapitulate both matter and evidence of a cause, as long as from hence to Eartham, with an intelligent smile on his features, that bespoke plainly the perfect ease with which he did it. The most abstruse studies (I believe) never cost him any labor.

You say nothing lately of your intended journey our way; yet the year is waning and the shorter days give you a hint to lose no time unnecessarily. Lately we had the whole family at the Hall, and now we have nobody. The Throckmortons are gone into Berkshire, and the Courtenays into Yorkshire. They are so pleasant a family, that I heartily wish you to see them; and at the same time wish to see you before they return, which will not be sooner than October. How shall I reconcile these wishes seemingly opposite? Why, by wishing that you may come soon and stay long. I know no other way of doing it.

My poor Mary is much as usual. I have set up Homer's head, and inscribed the pedestal; my own Greek at the top, with your translation under it, and

Ὡς δε παις ω πατρι, &c.

It makes altogether a very smart and learned appearance.* W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

August 29, 1793.

Your question, at what time your coming to us will be most agreeable, is a knotty one, and such as, had I the wisdom of Solomon, I should be puzzled to answer. I will therefore leave it still a question, and refer the time of your journey Weston-ward entirely to your own election: adding this one limitation, however, that I do not wish to see you exactly at present, on account of the unfinished state of my study, the wainscot of which still smells of paint, and which is not yet papered. But to return: as I have insinuated, thy pleasant company is the thing which I always wish, and as much at one time as at another. I believe, if I examine myself minutely, since I despair of ever having it in the height of summer, which for your sake I should desire most, the depth of the winter is the season which would be most eligible to me. For then it is, that in general I have most need of a cordial, and particularly in the month of January. I am sorry, however, that I departed so far from my first purpose, and am answering a question, which I declared myself unable to answer. Choose thy own time, secure of this, that, whatever time that be, it will always to us be a welcome one.

* This bust and pedestal were afterwards removed to Sir George Throckmorton's grounds, and placed in the shrubbery.

I thank you for your pleasant extract of Miss Fanshaw's letter.

> Her pen drops eloquence as sweet
> As any muse's tongue can speak;
> Nor need a scribe, like her, regret
> Her want of Latin or of Greek.*

And now, my dear, adieu! I have done more than I expected, and begin to feel myself exhausted with so much scribbling at the end of four hours' close application to study.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. JOHNSON.

Weston, Sept. 4, 1793.

My dearest Johnny,—To do a kind thing, and in a kind manner, is a double kindness, and no man is more addicted to both than you, or more skilful in contriving them. Your plan to surprise me agreeably succeeded to admiration. It was only the day before yesterday, that, while we walked after dinner in the orchard, Mrs. Unwin between Sam and me, hearing the Hall clock, I observed a great difference between that and ours, and began immediately to lament, as I had often done, that there was not a sun-dial in all Weston to ascertain the true time for us. My complaint was long, and lasted till, having turned into the grass-walk, we reached the new building at the end of it; where we sat awhile and reposed ourselves. In a few minutes we returned by the way we came, when what think you was my astonishment to see what I had not seen before, though I had passed close by it, a smart sun-dial mounted on a smart stone pedestal! I assure you it seemed the effect of conjuration. I stopped short, and exclaimed—"Why, here is a sun-dial, and upon our ground! How is this? Tell me, Sam, how it came here? Do you know anything about it?" At first I really thought (that is to say, as soon as I could think at all) that this fac-totum of mine, Sam Roberts, having often heard me deplore the want of one, had given orders for the supply of that want himself, without my knowledge, and was half pleased and half offended. But he soon exculpated himself by imputing the fact to you. It was brought up to Weston (it seems) about noon: but Andrews stopped the cart at the blacksmith's, whence he sent to inquire if I was gone for my walk. As it happened, I walked not till two o'clock. So there it stood waiting till I should go forth, and was introduced before my return. Fortunately, too, I went out at the church end of the village, and consequently saw nothing of it. How I could possibly pass it without seeing it, when it stood in the walk, I know not, but certain it is that I did.

* Miss Fanshaw was an intimate friend of Lady Hesketh's, and frequently residing with her.

And where I shall fix it now, I know as little. It cannot stand between the two gates, the place of your choice, as I understand from Samuel, because the hay-cart must pass that way in the season. But we are now busy in winding the walk all round the orchard, and, in doing so, shall doubtless stumble at last upon some open spot that will suit it.

There it shall stand while I live, a constant monument of your kindness.

I have this moment finished the twelfth book of the Odyssey; and I read the Iliad to Mrs. Unwin every evening.

The effect of this reading is, that I still spy blemishes, something at least that I can mend; so that, after all, the transcript of alterations which you and George have made will not be a perfect one. It would be foolish to forego an opportunity of improvement for such a reason: neither will I. It is ten o'clock, and I must breakfast. Adieu, therefore, my dear Johnny! Remember your appointment to see us in October.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 8, 1793.

Non sum quod simulo, my dearest brother! I am cheerful upon paper sometimes, when I am absolutely the most dejected of all creatures. Desirous, however, to gain something myself by my own letters, unprofitable as they may and must be to my friends, I keep melancholy out of them as much as I can, that I may, if possible, by assuming a less gloomy air, deceive myself, and, by feigning with a continuance, improve the fiction into reality.

So you have seen Flaxman's figures, which I intended you should not have seen till I had spread them before you. How did you dare to look at them? You should have covered your eyes with both hands: I am charmed with Flaxman's Penelope, and though you don't deserve that I should, will send you a few lines, such as they are, with which she inspired me the other day while I was taking my noon-day walk.

> The suitors sinn'd, but with a fair excuse,
> Whom all this elegance might well seduce;
> Nor can our censure on the husband fall,
> Who, for a wife so lovely slew them all.

I know not that you will meet anybody here, when we see you in October, unless perhaps my Johnny should happen to be with us. If Tom is charmed with the thoughts of coming to Weston, we are equally so with the thoughts of seeing him here. At his years I should hardly hope to make his visit agreeable to him, did I not know that he is of a temper and disposition that must make him happy everywhere. Give our love to him. If Romney can come with you, we have both room to receive him and hearts to make him most welcome.

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Sept. 15, 1793.

A thousand thanks, my dearest Catharina, for your pleasant letter; one of the pleasantest that I have received since your departure. You are very good to apologize for your delay, but I had not flattered myself with the hopes of a speedier answer. Knowing full well your talents for entertaining your friends who are present, I was sure you would with difficulty find half an hour that you could devote to an absent one.

I am glad that you think of your return. Poor Weston is a desolation without you. In the meantime I amuse myself as well as I can, thrumming old Homer's lyre, and turning the premises upside down. Upside down indeed, for so it is literally that I have been dealing with the orchard, almost ever since you went, digging and delving it around to make a new walk, which now begins to assume the shape of one, and to look as if some time or other it may serve in that capacity. Taking my usual exercise there the other day with Mrs. Unwin, a wide disagreement between your clock and ours occasioned me to complain much, as I have often done, of the want of a dial. Guess my surprise, when at the close of my complaint I saw one—saw one close at my side; a smart one, glittering in the sun, and mounted on a pedestal of stone. I was astonished. "This," I exclaimed, "is absolute conjuration!"—It was a most mysterious affair, but the mystery was at last explained.

This scribble I presume will find you just arrived at Bucklands. I would with all my heart that since dials can be thus suddenly conjured from one place to another, I could be so too, and could start up before your eyes in the middle of some walk or lawn, where you and Lady Frog are wandering.

While Pitcairne whistles for his family estate in Fifeshire, he will do well if he will sound a few notes for me. I am originally of the same shire, and a family of my name is still there, to whom perhaps he may whistle on my behalf, not altogether in vain. So shall his fife excel all my poetical efforts, which have not yet, and I dare say never will, effectually charm one acre of ground into my possession.

Remember me to Sir John, Lady Frog, and your husband—tell them I love them all. She told me once she was jealous, now indeed she seems to have some reason, since to her I have not written, and have written twice to you. But bid her be of good cour

age, in due time I will give her proof of my constancy. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. JOHNSON.

Weston, Sept. 29, 1793.

My dear Johnny,—You have done well to leave off visiting and being visited. Visits are insatiable devourers of time, and fit only for those who, if they did not that, would do nothing. The worst consequence of such departures from common practice is to be termed a singular sort of a fellow, or an odd fish; a sort of reproach that a man might be wise enough to contemn who had not half your understanding.

I look forward with pleasure to October the 11th, the day which I expect will be *albo notandus lapillo*, on account of your arrival here.

Here you will meet Mr. Rose, who comes on the 8th, and brings with him Mr. Lawrence, the painter, you may guess for what purpose. Lawrence returns when he has made his copy of me, but Mr. Rose will remain perhaps as long as you will. Hayley on the contrary will come, I suppose, just in time not to see you. Him we expect on the 20th. I trust, however, that thou wilt so order thy pastoral matters as to make thy stay here as long as possible.

Lady Hesketh, in her last letter, inquires very kindly after you, asks me for your address, and purposes soon to write to you. We hope to see her in November—so that, after a summer without company, we are likely to have an autumn and a winter sociable enough. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 5, 1793.

My good intentions towards you, my dearest brother, are continually frustrated; and, which is most provoking, not by such engagements and avocations as have a right to my attention, such as those to my Mary and the old bard of Greece, but by mere impertinences, such as calls of civility from persons not very interesting to me, and letters from a distance still less interesting, because the writers of them are strangers. A man sent me a long copy of verses, which I could do no less than acknowledge. They were silly enough, and cost me eighteenpence, which was seventeenpence half-penny farthing more than they were worth. Another sent me at the same time a plan, requesting my opinion of it, and that I would lend him my name as editor, a request with which I shall not comply, but I am obliged to tell him so, and one letter is all that I have time to despatch in a day, sometimes half a one, and sometimes I am not able to write at all. Thus it is that my time perishes, and I can neither give so much of it as I would to you or to any other valuable purpose.

On Tuesday we expect company—Mr. Rose, and Lawrence the painter. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised, and once more I am made to wish that my face had been moveable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a band-box, and sent to the artist. These however will be gone, as I believe I told you, before you arrive, at which time I know not that anybody will be here, except my Johnny, whose presence will not at all interfere with our readings—you will not, I believe, find me a very slashing critic—I hardly indeed expect to find anything in your Life of Milton that I shall sentence to amputation. How should it be too long? A well-written work, sensible and spirited, such as yours was, when I saw it, is never so. But, however, we shall see. I promise to spare nothing that I think may be lopped off with advantage.

I began this letter yesterday, but could not finish it till now. I have risen this morning like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ooze and mud of melancholy. For this reason I am not sorry to find myself at the bottom of my paper, for had I more room perhaps I might fill it all with croaking, and make an heart-ache at Eartham, which I wish to be always cheerful. Adieu. My poor sympathising Mary is of course sad, but always mindful of you.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 18, 1793.

My dear Brother,—I have not at present much that is necessary to say here, because I shall have the happiness of seeing you so soon; my time, according to custom, is a mere scrap, for which reason such must be my letter also.

You will find here more than I have hitherto given you reason to expect, but none who will not be happy to see you. These, however, stay with us but a short time, and will leave us in full possession of Weston on Wednesday next.

I look forward with joy to your coming, heartily wishing you a pleasant journey, in which my poor Mary joins me. Give our best love to Tom; without whom, after having been taught to look for him, we should feel our pleasure in the interview much diminished.

Læti expectamus te puerumque tuum.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

Weston, Oct. 22, 1793.

My dear Friend,—You are very kind to apologize for a short letter, instead of reproaching me with having been so long entirely silent. I persuaded myself, however, that while you were on your journey you would miss me less as a correspondent than you do when you are at home, and therefore allowed myself to pursue my literary labors only, but still purposing to write as soon as I should have reason to judge you returned to London. Hindrances, however, to the execution even of that purpose, have interposed; and at this moment I write in the utmost haste, as indeed, I always do, partly because I never begin a letter till I am already fatigued with study, and partly through fear of interruption before I can possibly finish it.

I rejoice that you have travelled so much to your satisfaction. As to me, my travelling days, I believe, are over. Our journey of last year was less beneficial, both to Mrs. Unwin's health and my spirits, than I hoped it might be: and we are hardly rich enough to migrate in quest of pleasure merely.

I thank you much for your last publication, which I am reading, as fast as I can snatch opportunity, to Mrs. Unwin. We have found it, as far as we have gone, both interesting and amusing; and I never cease to wonder at the fertility of your invention, that, shut up as you were in your vessel, and disunited from the rest of mankind, could yet furnish you with such variety, and with the means, likewise, of saying the same thing in so many different ways.†

Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. J. JEKYLL RYE.

Weston, Nov. 3, 1793.

My dear Sir,—Sensible as I am of your kindness in taking such a journey, at no very pleasant season, merely to serve a friend of mine, I cannot allow my thanks to sleep till I may have the pleasure of seeing you. I hope never to show myself unmindful of so great a favor. Two lines which I received yesterday from Mr. Hurdis, written hastily on the day of decision, informed me that it was made in his favor, and by a majority of twenty.‡ I have great satisfaction in the event, and consequently hold myself indebted to all who at my instance have contributed to it.

You may depend on me for due attention to the honest clerk's request. When he called, it was not possible that I should answer your obliging letter, for he arrived here very early, and if I suffered anything to interfere with my morning studies I should never accomplish my labors. Your hint concerning the subject for this year's copy is a very good one, and shall not be neglected.

I remain, sincerely yours, W. C.

Hayley's second visit to Weston took place very soon after the date of the last letter. He found Cowper enlivened by the society of his young kinsman from Norfolk, and another of his favorite friends, Mr. Rose. The latter came recently from the seat of Lord Spencer, in Northamptonshire, commissioned to invite Cowper, and his guests, to Althorpe, where Gibbon, the historian, was making a visit of some continuance.

Cowper was strongly urged to accept this flattering invitation from a nobleman whom he cordially respected, and whose library alone might be regarded as a magnet of very powerful attraction. But the constitutional shyness of the poet, and the infirm state of Mrs. Unwin's health, conspired to prevent the meeting. It would have been curious to have contemplated the Poet of Christianity and the author of the celebrated sixteenth chapter in "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" placed in juxtaposition with each other. The reflection would not have escaped a pious observer how much happier, in the eye of wisdom, was the state of Cowper, clouded as it was by depression and sorrow, than that of the unbelieving philosopher, though in the zenith of his fame. We know it has been asserted that men are not answerable for their creed. Why then are the Jews a scattered people, the living witnesses of the truth of a divine Revelation and of the avenging justice of God? But scepticism can never justly be said to originate in want of evidence. Men doubt because they search after truth with the pride of the intellect, instead of seeking it with the simplicity of a little child, and that humility of spirit, by which only it is to be found.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Nov. 4, 1793.

I seldom rejoice in a day of soaking rain like this, but in this, my dearest Catharina, I do rejoice sincerely, because it affords me an opportunity of writing to you, which, if fair weather had invited us into the orchard-walk at the usual hour, I should not easily have found. I am a most busy man, busy to a degree that sometimes half distracts me; but, if complete distraction be occasioned by having the thoughts too much and too long attached to a single point, I am in no danger of it, with such a perpetual whirl are mine

* Private correspondence.

† The publication alluded to is entitled, "Letters to a Wife: written during three voyages to Africa, from 1750 to 1754. By the author of Cardiphonia."

‡ He was appointed Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford.

whisked about from one subject to another. When two poets meet, there are fine doings I can assure you. My Homer finds work for Hayley, and his Life of Milton work for me, so that we are neither of us one moment idle. Poor Mrs. Unwin in the meantime sits quiet in her corner, occasionally laughing at us both, and not seldom interrupting us with some question or remark, for which she is constantly rewarded by me with a "Hush—hold your peace." Bless yourself, my dear Catharina, that you are not connected with a poet, especially that you have not two to deal with; ladies who have, may be bidden indeed to hold their peace, but very little peace have they. How should they in fact have any, continually enjoined as they are to be silent.

. . . . . .

The same fever that has been so epidemic there, has been severely felt here likewise; some have died, and a multitude have been in danger. Two under our own roof have been infected with it, and I am not sure that I have perfectly escaped myself, but I am now well again.

I have persuaded Hayley to stay a week longer, and again my hopes revive, that he may yet have an opportunity to know my friends before he returns into Sussex. I write amidst a chaos of interruptions: Hayley on one hand spouts Greek, and on the other hand Mrs. Unwin continues talking, sometimes to us, and sometimes, because we are both too busy to attend to her, she holds a dialogue with herself. Query, is not this a bull—and ought I not instead of dialogue to have said soliloquy?

Adieu! With our united love to all your party, and with ardent wishes soon to see you all at Weston, I remain, my dearest Catharina,

Ever yours, W. C.

Though Cowper writes with apparent cheerfulness, yet Hayley, referring to this visit, remarks, "My fears for him, in every point of view, were alarmed by his present very singular condition. He possessed completely, at this period, all the admirable faculties of his mind, and all the native tenderness of his heart; but there was something indescribable in his appearance, which led me to apprehend that, without some signal event in his favor, to re-animate his spirits, they would gradually sink into hopeless dejection. The state of his aged infirm companion afforded additional ground for increasing solicitude. Her cheerful and beneficent spirit could hardly resist her own accumulated maladies, so far as to preserve ability sufficient to watch over the tender health of him, whom she had watched and guarded so long."

Under these circumstances, Hayley, with an ardor of zeal and a regard for Cowper's welfare, that reflect the highest honor upon his character, determined on his return to London to interest his more powerful friends in his behalf, and thus secure, if possible, a timely provision against future difficulties. The necessity for this act of kindness will soon appear to be painfully urgent. In the meantime he cheered Cowper's mind, harassed by his Miltonic engagement, with intelligence that had a tendency to relieve him from much of his present embarrassment and dejection.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 5, 1793.

My dear Friend,—In a letter from Lady Hesketh, which I received not long since, she informed me how very pleasantly she had spent some time at Wargrave. We now begin to expect her here, where our charms of situation are perhaps not equal to yours, yet by no means contemptible. She told me she had spoken to you in very handsome terms of the country round about us, but not so of our house and the view before it. The house itself, however, is not unworthy some commendation; small as it is, it is neat, and neater than she is aware of; for my study and the room over it have been repaired and beautified this summer, and little more was wanting to make it an abode sufficiently commodious for a man of my moderate desires. As to the prospect from it, that she misrepresented strangely, as I hope soon to have an opportunity to convince her by ocular demonstration. She told you, I know, of certain cottages opposite to us, or rather she described them as poor houses and hovels, that effectually blind our windows. But none such exist. On the contrary, the opposite object and the only one, is an orchard so well planted, and with trees of such growth, that we seem to look into a wood, or rather to be surrounded by one. Thus, placed as we are in the midst of a village, we have none of those disagreeables that belong to such a position, and the village itself is one of the prettiest I know; terminated at one end by the church tower, seen through the trees, and at the other by a very handsome gateway, opening into a fine grove of elms, belonging to our neighbor Courtenay. How happy should I be to show it instead of describing it to you!

Adieu, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Nov. 10, 1793.

My dear Friend,—You are very kind to consider my literary engagements, and to

make them a reason for not interrupting me more frequently with a letter; but though I am indeed as busy as an author or an editor can well be, and am not apt to be overjoyed at the arrival of letters from uninteresting quarters, I shall always, I hope, have leisure both to peruse and to answer those of my real friends, and to do both with pleasure.

I have to thank you much for your benevolent aid in the affair of my friend Hurdis. You have doubtless learned, ere now, that he has succeeded, and carried the prize by a majority of twenty. He is well qualified for the post he has gained. So much the better for the honor of the Oxonian laurel, and so much the more for the credit of those who have favored him with their suffrages.

I am entirely of your mind respecting this conflagration by which all Europe suffers at present,* and is likely to suffer for a long time to come. The same mistake seems to have prevailed as in the American business. We then flattered ourselves that the colonies would prove an easy conquest, and, when all the neighbor nations armed themselves against France, we imagined, I believe, that she too would be presently vanquished. But we begin already to be undeceived, and God only knows to what a degree we may find we have erred at the conclusion. Such, however, is the state of things all around us, as reminds me continually of the Psalmist's expression—"*He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*" And I rather wish than hope, in some of my melancholy moods, that England herself may escape a fracture.

I remain, truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

Weston, Nov. 24, 1793.

My dear Sir,—Though my congratulations have been delayed, you have no friend, numerous as your friends are, who has more sincerely rejoiced in your success than I. It was no small mortification to me, to find that three out of the six whom I had engaged were not qualified to vote. You have prevailed, however, and by a considerable majority: there is therefore no room left for regret. When your short note arrived, which gave me the agreeable news of your victory, our friend of Eartham was with me, and shared largely in the joy that I felt on the occasion. He left me but a few days since, having spent somewhat more than a fortnight here; during which time we employed all our leisure hours in the revisal of his Life of Milton. It is now finished, and a very finished work it is; and one that will do great honor, I am persuaded, to the biographer, and the excellent man of injured memory who is the subject of it. As to my own concern with the works of this first of poets, which has been long a matter of burthensome contemplation, I have the happiness to find at last that I am at liberty to postpone my labors. While I expected that my commentary would be called for in the ensuing spring, I looked forward to the undertaking with dismay, not seeing a shadow of probability that I should be ready to answer the demand; for this ultimate revisal of my Homer, together with the notes, occupies completely at present (and will for some time longer) all the little leisure that I have for study—leisure which I gain at this season of the year by rising long before daylight.

You are now become a nearer neighbor, and as your professorship, I hope, will not engross you wholly, will find an opportunity to give me your company at Weston. Let me hear from you soon; tell me how you like your new office, and whether you perform the duties of it with pleasure to yourself. With much pleasure to others you will, I doubt not, and with equal advantage.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 29, 1793.

My dear Friend,—I have risen, while the owls are still hooting, to pursue my accustomed labors in the mine of Homer; but before I enter upon them, shall give the first moment of daylight to the purpose of thanking you for your last letter, containing many pleasant articles of intelligence, with nothing to abate the pleasantness of them, except the single circumstance that we are not likely to see you here so soon as I expected. My hope was, that the first frost would bring you and the amiable painter with you.* If, however, you are prevented by the business of your respective professions, you are well prevented, and I will endeavor to be patient. When the latter was here, he mentioned one day the subject of Diomede's horses, driven under the axle of his chariot by the thunderbolt which fell at their feet, as a subject for his pencil.† It is certainly a noble one, and therefore worthy of his study and attention. It occured to me at the moment, but I know not what it was that made me forget it again the next moment, that the horses of Achilles flying over the foss, with Patroclus and Automedon in the chariot, would be a good companion for it.‡ Should you happen to

* The effects of the French Revolution.

* Lawrence.

† He, thundering downward hurl'd his candent bolt
To the horse-feet of Diomede: dire fum'd
The flaming sulphur, and both horses drove
Under the axle.— *Cowper's Version*, book viii.

‡ Right o'er the hollow foss the coursers leap'd,
By the immortal gods to Peleus given.—
Cowper's Version, book xvi.

recollect this, when you next see him, you may submit it, if you please, to his consideration. I stumbled yesterday on another subject, which reminded me of said excellent artist, as likely to afford a fine opportunity to the expression that he could give it. It is found in the shooting match in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, between Meriones and Teucer. The former cuts the string with which the dove is tied to the mast-head, and sets her at liberty; the latter, standing at his side, in all the eagerness of emulation, points an arrow at the mark with his right hand, while with his left he snatches the bow from his competitor; he is a fine poetical figure, but Mr. Lawrence himself must judge whether or not he promises as well for the canvas.*

He does great honor to my physiognomy by his intention to get it engraved; and, though I think I foresee that this *private publication* will grow in time into a publication of absolute publicity, I find it impossible to be dissatisfied with anything that seems eligible both to him and you. To say the truth, when a man has once turned his mind inside out for the inspection of all who choose to inspect it, to make a secret of his face seems but little better than a self-contradiction. At the same time, however, I shall be best pleased if it be kept, according to your intentions, as a rarity.

I have lost Hayley, and begin to be uneasy at not hearing from him; tell me about him when you write.

I should be happy to have a work of mine embellished by Lawrence, and made a companion for a work of Hayley's. It is an event to which I look forward with the utmost complacence. I cannot tell you what a relief I feel it not to be pressed for Milton.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 8, 1793.

My dear Friend,—In my last I forgot to thank you for the box of books, containing also the pamphlets. We have read, that is to say, my cousin has, who reads to us in the evening, the history of Jonathan Wild,† and found it highly entertaining. The satire on great men is witty, and I believe perfectly just: we have no censure to pass on it, unless that we think the character of Mrs. Heartfree not well sustained; not quite delicate in the latter part of it; and that the constant effect of her charms upon every man who sees her, has a sameness in it that is tiresome, and betrays either much carelessness, or idleness, or lack of invention. It is possible, indeed, that the author might intend by this circumstance a satirical glance at novelists, whose heroines are generally all bewitching; but it is a fault that he had better have noticed in another manner, and not have exemplified in his own.

The first volume of *Man as He is* has lain unread in my study-window this twelvemonth, and would have been returned unread to its owner, had not my cousin come in good time to save it from that disgrace. We are now reading it, and find it excellent; abounding with wit and just sentiment, and knowledge both of books and men.

Adieu, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 8, 1793.

I have waited and waited impatiently, for a line from you, and am at last determined to send you one, to inquire what has become of you, and why you are silent so much longer than usual.

I want to know many things, which only you can tell me, but especially I want to know what has been the issue of your conference with Nichol: has he seen your work?* I am impatient for the appearance of it, because impatient to have the spotless credit of the great poet's character, as a man and a citizen, vindicated, as it ought to be, and as it never will be again.

It is a great relief to me, that my Miltonic labors are suspended. I am now busy in transcribing the alterations of Homer, having finished the whole revisal. I must then write a new preface, which done, I shall endeavor immediately to descant on *The Four Ages*.

Adieu! my dear brother, W. C.

The Miltonic labors of Cowper were not only suspended at this time, but we lament to say never resumed.

There is a period in the history of men of letters when the mind begins to shrink from the toil and responsibility of a great undertaking and to feel the necessity of contracting its exertions within limits more suited to its diminished powers. Physical and moral causes are often found to co-operate in hastening this crisis. The sensibilities that are inseparable from genius, the ardor

* Cowper here inverts the order of the names, and attributes to Teucer, what in the original is ascribed to Meriones.

> At once Meriones withdrew the bow
> From Teucer's hand, but held the shaft the while,
> Already aim'd. . . . . .
> He ey'd the dove aloft beneath a cloud,
> And struck her circling high in air; the shaft
> Pass'd through her, and returning pierc'd the soil
> Before the foot of brave Meriones.
> She, perching on the mast again, her head
> Reclin'd, and hung her wide-unfolded wing;
> But, soon expiring, dropp'd and fell remote.

The concluding lines of this passage convey a beautiful and affecting image.

† A production of Fielding's.

* Hayley's Life of Milton.

that consumes itself by its own fires, the labor of thought, and the inadequacy of the body to sustain the energies of the soul within—these often unite in harassing the spirits, and sowing the seeds of a premature decay. Such was now the case with Cowper. His literary exertions had been too unremitting, and though we must allow much to the influence of his unhappy malady, and to the illness of Mrs. Unwin, yet there can be no doubt that his long and laborious habits of study had no small share in undermining his constitution.

It seems desirable therefore, at this period, to refer to the intended edition of Milton, and briefly to state the result of his labors.

The design is thus stated by Cowper himself, in one of his letters. "A Milton, that is to rival, and if possible to exceed in splendor, Boydell's Shakspeare, is in contemplation, and I am in the Editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes; to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text."

All that he was enabled to accomplish of this undertaking was as follows:

He commenced the series of his translations about the middle of September, 1791. In February, 1792, he had completed all his Latin pieces, and shortly after he finished the Italian. While at Eartham, in August, he revised all his translations, and they were subsequently retouched, in his declining strength, at East Dereham. From an amiable desire to avoid what might create irritation, he omitted the Poems against the Catholics, and thus assigned his motives in a letter to Johnson.

Weston, Oct. 30, 1791.

"We and the Papists are at present on amicable terms. They have behaved themselves peaceably many years, and have lately received favor from Government. I should think, therefore, that the dying embers of ancient animosity had better not be troubled."

He also omitted a few of the minuter poems, as not worthy of being ranked with the rest.

He was assisted in the execution of this work by the Adamo of Andreini, Bentley's Milton, an interleaved copy of Newton's, and Warton's edition of the minor poems.*

With respect to his critical labors, he proceeded with singular slowness and difficulty. It appears to have been a most oppressive burden on his spirits. "Milton especially," he observes, "is my grievance; and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost as goaded with continual reproaches for neglecting him." He was always soliciting more time, and when the appointed period was expired, he renewed his application for fresh delay. His commentary is restricted to the three first books of the Paradise Lost.

This seems to imply that however nature designed him to be a poet, she denied the qualifications necessary to constitute the critic, for it will generally be found, that to execute with delight and ease is the attribute of genius, and the evidence of natural impulse; and that slowness of performance indicates the want of those powers that afford the promise and pledge of success.

In this unfinished state, the work was published by Hayley, in the year 1808, for the benefit of the second son of Mr. Rose, the godchild of Cowper. Some designs in outline were furnished by Flaxman, highly characteristic of his graceful style.

The translations are a perfect model of beautiful and elegant versification.

We consider Milton's address to his father to be one of the most beautiful compositions extant, and rejoice in presenting it to the reader in an English form, so worthy of the original Latin poem.

* Of these editions of Milton, that of Bentley has always been considered a complete failure. It is remarkable for the boldness of its conjectural emendations, and for the liberties taken with the text. An amusing anecdote is recorded on this subject. To a friend expostulating with him on the occasion, and urging that it was impossible for Milton, in so many instances, to have written as he alleged, he replied with his characteristic spirit, "Then he ought to have written so." Bishop Newton's edition has acquired just celebrity, and has served as the basis of all subsequent editions. It has been deservedly called "the best edited English Classic up to the period of its publication." Warton's edition of "The Juvenile and Minor Poems" discovers a classical and elegant taste. Its merit, however, is greatly impaired by the severity of its censures on Milton's republican and religious principles. It was to rescue that great poet from the animadversions of Warton and Dr. Johnson that Hayley engaged in a life of Milton, which does honor to the manliness and generosity of his feelings. But the most powerful defence is that of the Rev. Dr. Symons, who, with considerable vigor of thought and language, has taken a most comprehensive view of the character and prose writings of Milton. He would have been entitled to distinguished praise, if, in vindicating the republicanism of Milton, he had not deeply fallen into it himself. In the present day the clouds of prejudice seem to have subsided, and the errors of the politician are deservedly forgotten in the celebrity of the poet. There was a period when, according to Dr. Johnson, a monument to Philips, with an inscription by Atterbury, in which he was said to be *soli Miltono secundus*, was refused admittance by Dean Sprat into Westminster Abbey, on the ground of its "being too detestable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion."

The honors of a monument were at length conceded to Milton himself; but the beautiful and elegant Latin inscription, composed by Dr. George, Provost of King's College, Cambridge, shows that it was thought necessary to apologize for its admission into that sacred repository of kings and prelates.*

* We cannot refrain from enriching our pages with this much admired Epitaph.

"Augusti regum cineres sanctæque favillæ
Heroum, Vosque O! venerandi nominis umbræ!
Parcite, quod vestris, infensum regibus olim,
Sedibus inferter nomen; liceatque supremis
Funeribus finere odia, et mors obruat iras.
Nunc sub fœderibus coeant felicibus, una
Libertas, et jus sacri inviolabile sceptri.
Rege sub *Augusto* fas sit laudare *Catonem*."

TO HIS FATHER.

Oh that Pieria's spring would thro' my breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush.
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood!
That for my venerable father's sake,
All meaner themes renounc'd, my muse on wings
Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
For thee, my father, howsoe'er it please,
She frames this slender work, nor know I aught,
That may thy gifts more suitably requite;
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude:
But, such as I possess, I send thee all.
This page presents thee in their full amount
With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought:
Nought save the riches that from airy dream
In secret grottoes, and in laurel bow'rs,
I have, by golden Clio's gift, acquir'd.

He then sings the praises of song in the following animated strain.

Verse is a work divine; despise not thou
Verse therefore, which evinces (nothing more)
Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespeaks him animated from above. [selves
The gods love verse, the infernal pow'rs them-
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the shades.
In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale
Tremulous Sybil, make the future known,
And he who sacrifices, on the shrine [bull,
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threat'ning
And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
To scrutinize the Fates envelop'd there.

He anticipates it as one of the employments of glorified spirits in heaven.

We too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies, and one eternal Now*
Shall be the only measure of our being,
Crown'd all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the starry firmament resound.

The sympathy existing between the two kindred studies of poetry and music is described with happy effect.

Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoin'd
In close affinity we sympathize
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift,† and I
Mine also, and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring god.

The following effusion of filial feeling is as honorable to the discernment and liberality of the parent, as it is expressive of the gratitude of the son.

. . . Thou never bad'st me tread
The beaten path and broad, that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamors of the bar,
To laws voluminous and ill-observ'd;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away
From city-din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts,
My father! who, when I had open'd once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learn'd
The full-ton'd language of the eloquent Grecks,
Whose lofty music grac'd the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flow'rs,
That Gallia boasts, those too, with which the
Italian his degen'rate speech adorns, [smooth
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth;
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.

We delight in witnessing the exuberance of manly and generous feeling in a son towards a parent, entitled by kind offices to his gratitude, and therefore transcribe the following passage.

Go now, and gather dross, ye sordid minds,
That covet it? what could my father more?
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode, the heaven in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe,
As they were insecure, who made the boy
The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all-dazzling wreath.
I therefore, although last and least my place
Among the learned, in the laurel grove
Will hold, and where the conqu'ror's ivy twines,
Henceforth exempt from the unletter'd throng
Profane, nor even to be seen by such.
Away then, sleepless Care, Complaint, away!
And Envy, with thy jealous leer malign!
Nor let the monster Calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileg'd, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high for your viperean wound.

He thus beautifully concludes this affecting tribute of filial gratitude.

But thou, my father! since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasur'd in a grateful mind!
Ye too, the favorite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Lethæan gulf,
Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the fathers of a distant age!

We subjoin Hayley's remark on this poem, in Cowper's edition of Milton.

"These verses are founded on one of the most interesting subjects that language can display the warmth and felicity of strong re-

* The same expression is used by Cowley:
"Nothing is there to come, and nothing past,
But an eternal Now does always last."

† Milton's father was well skilled in music.

ciprocal kindness between a father and a son, not only united by the most sacred tie of nature, but still more endeared to each other by the happy cultivation of honorable and congenial arts. The sublime description of poetry, and the noble and graceful portrait, which the author here exhibits of his own mental character, may be said to render this splendid poem the prime jewel in a coronet of variegated gems."

We extract the following passages from the remarks and notes in Cowper's Milton, as exhibiting the manner in which he executed this portion of his labors.

BOOK I.

"There is a solemnity of sentiment, as well as majesty of numbers, in the exordium of this noble poem, which, in the works of the ancients, has no example.

"The sublimest of all subjects was reserved for Milton; and, bringing to the contemplation of that subject, not only a genius equal to the best of theirs but a heart also deeply impregnated with the divine truths which lay before him, it is no wonder that he has produced a composition, on the whole, superior to any that we have received from former ages. But he who addresses himself to the perusal of this work, with a mind entirely unaccustomed to serious and spiritual contemplation, unacquainted with the word of God, or prejudiced against it, is ill qualified to appreciate the value of a poem built upon it, or to taste its beauties. Milton is the poet of Christians; an infidel may have an ear for the harmony of his numbers, may be aware of the dignity of his expression, and, in some degree, of the sublimity of his conceptions; but the unaffected and masculine piety, which was his true inspirer, and is the very soul of his poem, he will not either perceive, or it will offend him."

To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Line 177.

"In this we seem to hear a thunder suited both to the scene and the occasion, incomparably more awful than any ever heard on earth, and the *thunder winged with lightning* is highly poetical. It may be observed here, that the thunder of Milton is not hurled from the hand like Homer's, but discharged like an arrow. Thus in book vi., line 712, the Father, ordering forth the Son for the destruction of the rebel angels, says—

. . . . . Bring forth all my war,
My bow, and thunder.

As if, jealous for the honor of the true God, the poet disdained to arm him like the god of the heathen."*

He spake, and to confirm his words, &c. &c.
Line 663.

* Psalm vii. 12.

"This is another instance in which appears the advantage that Milton derives from the grandeur of his subject. What description could even he have given of a host of human warriors insulting their conqueror, at all comparable to this? First, their multitude is to be noticed. They are not thousands, but millions; and they are millions, not of puny mortals, but of mighty cherubim. Their swords flame, not metaphorically, but they are swords of fire; they flash not by reflection of the sun-beams, like the swords of Homer, but by their own light, and that light plays not idly in the broad day, but far round illumines Hell. And lastly, they defy not a created being like themselves, but the Almighty."

BOOK II.

As when from mountain tops, &c.
Line 488.

"The reader loses half the beauty of this charming simile, who does not give particular attention to the numbers. There is a majesty in them not often equalled, and never surpassed, even by this great poet himself; the movement is uncommonly slow; an effect produced by means already hinted at, the assemblage of a greater proportion of long syllables than usual. The pauses are also managed with great skill and judgment; while the clouds rise, and the heavens gather blackness, they fall in those parts of the verse where they retard the reader most, and thus become expressive of the solemnity of the subject; but in the latter part of the simile, when the sun breaks out, and the scene brightens, they are so disposed as to allow the verse an easier and less interrupted flow, more suited to the cheerfulness of the occasion."

He concludes with the following summary of the great doctrines that form the foundation of the Paradise Lost.

"It may not be amiss, at the close of these admirable speeches—as admirable for their sound divinity as for the perspicuity with which it is expressed—to allow ourselves a moment's pause, for the purpose of taking a short retrospect of the doctrines contained in them. Man, in the beginning, is placed in a probationary state, and made the arbiter of his own destiny. By his own fault, he forfeits happiness, both for himself and his descendants. But mercy interposes for his restoration. That mercy is represented as perfectly free, as vouchsafed to the most unworthy: to creatures so entirely dead in sin as to be destitute even of a sense of their need of it, and consequently too stupid even to ask it. They are also as poor as they are unfeeling; and, were it possible that they could affect themselves with a just sense and apprehension of their lapsed condition, they

would have no compensation to offer to their offended Maker, nothing with which they can satisfy the demands of his justice,—in short, no atonement. In this ruinous state of their affairs, and when all hope of reconciliation seems lost forever, the Son of God voluntarily undertakes for them,—undertakes to become the son of man also, and to suffer, in man's stead, the penalty annexed to his transgression. In consequence of this self-substitution, Christ becomes the federal head of his church, and the sole author of salvation to his people. As Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity, so the faultless obedience of the second Adam is imputed to all, who, in the great concern of justification, shall renounce their own obedience as imperfect and therefore incompetent. The sentence is thus reversed as to all believers: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' The Saviour presents the redeemed before the throne of the Eternal Father, in whose countenance no longer any symptom of displeasure appears against them, but their joy and peace are thenceforth perfect. The general resurrection takes place; the saints are made assessors with Christ in the judgment, both of men and angels; the new heaven and earth, the destined habitation of the just, succeed; the Son of God, his whole undertaking accomplished, surrenders the kingdom to his Father: God becomes all in all! It is easy to see, that, among these doctrines, there are some which, in modern times, have been charged with novelty; but how new they are Milton is a witness."

Fuseli, whose labors were so unfortunately superseded, completed a series of admirable paintings from subjects furnished by the Paradise Lost; which were afterwards exhibited in London, under the name of the Milton Gallery. He thus acquired a reputation which placed him in the first rank of artists; and the amateur had the opportunity of seeing, in the Shakspeare and Milton galleries, the most distinguished painters engaged in illustrating the productions of the two greatest authors that ever adorned any age or country.*

This projected edition of Milton is remarkable as having laid the foundation of the intercourse, which soon ripened into friendship, between Cowper and Hayley. The latter was at that time engaged in writing a life of Milton, which gave rise to his being represented as an opponent of Cowper. To exonerate himself from such an imputation, he wrote the letter which we subjoin in a note.*

Having detailed the circumstances connected with the edition of Milton, we return to the regular correspondence.

* A popular writer paid the following eloquent tribute to these masterly specimens of professional art.

Yet mark each willing Muse, where Boydell draws,
And calls the sister pow'rs in Shakspeare's cause!
By art controll'd the fire of Reynolds breaks,
And nature's pathos in her Northcote speaks;
The Grecian forms in Hamilton combine,
Parrhasian grace, and Zeuxis' softest line;
There Barry's learning meets with Romney's strength,
And Smirke portrays Thalia at full length.

Lo! Fuseli (in whose tempestuous soul
The unnavigable tides of genius roll,)
Depicts the sulph'rous fire, the smould'ring light,
The bridge chaotic o'er the abyss of night,
With each accursed form and mystic spell,
And singly "bears up all the fame of hell!"

Pursuits of Literature.

* Eartham, Feb., 1792.

Dear Sir,—I have often been tempted, by affectionate admiration of your poetry, to trouble you with a letter; but I have repeatedly checked myself by recollecting that the vanity of believing ourselves distantly related in spirit to a man of genius is but a sorry apology for intruding on his time.

Though I resisted my desire of professing myself your friend, that I might not disturb you with intrusive familiarity, I cannot resist a desire, equally affectionate, of disclaiming an idea which I am told is imputed to me, of considering myself, on a recent occasion, as an antagonist to you. Allow me, therefore, to say, I was solicited to write a Life of Milton, for Boydell and Nichol, before I had the least idea that you and Mr. Fuseli were concerned in a project similar to theirs. When I first heard of your intention, I was apprehensive that we might undesignedly thwart each other; but, on seeing your proposals, I am agreeably persuaded that our respective labors will be far from clashing; as it is your design to illustrate Milton with a series of notes, and I only mean to execute a more candid life of him than his late biographer has given us, upon a plan that will, I flatter myself, be particularly pleasing to those who love the author as we do.

As to the pecuniary interests of those persons who venture large sums in expensive decoration of Milton, I am persuaded his expanding glory will support them all. Every splendid edition, where the merits of the pencil are in any degree worthy of the poet, will, I think, be secure of success. I wish it cordially to all; as I have a great affection for the arts, and a sincere regard for those whose talents reflect honor upon them.

To you, my dear sir, I have a grateful attachment, for the infinite delight which your writings have afforded me; and if, in the course of your work, I have any opportunity to serve or oblige you, I shall seize it with that friendly spirit which has impelled me at present to assure you both in prose and rhyme, that I am your cordial admirer.

W. Hayley.

P. S. I wrote the enclosed sonnet on being told that our names had been idly printed together in a newspaper, *as hostile competitors*. Pray forgive its partial defects for its affectionate sincerity. From my ignorance of your address, I send this to your bookseller's by a person commissioned to place my name in the list of your subscribers; and let me add, if you ever wish to form a new collection of names for any similar purpose, I entreat you to honor me so far as to rank *mine*, of your own accord, among those of your sincerest friends. Adieu!

SONNET.

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

On hearing that our names had been idly mentioned in a newspaper, as competitors in a Life of Milton.

Cowper! delight of all who justly prize
The splendid magic of a strain divine,
That sweetly tempts th' enlighten'd soul to rise,
As sunbeams lure an eagle to the skies.
Poet! to whom I feel my heart incline
As to a friend endeared by virtue's ties;
Ne'er shall my name in pride's contentious line
With hostile emulation cope with thine!
No, let us meet, with kind fraternal aim,
Where Milton's shrine invites a votive throng.
With thee I share a passion for his fame,
His zeal for truth, his scorn of venal blame:
But thou hast rarer gifts,—to thee belong
His harp of highest tone—his sanctity of song.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.*

Weston, Dec. 10, 1793.

You mentioned, my dear friend, in your last letter, an unfavorable sprain that you had received, which you apprehended might be very inconvenient to you for some time to come; and having learned also from Lady Hesketh the same unwelcome intelligence, in terms still more alarming than those in which you related the accident yourself, I cannot but be anxious, as well as my cousin, to know the present state of it; and shall truly rejoice to hear that it is in a state of recovery. Give us a line of information on this subject, as soon as you can conveniently, and you will much oblige us.

I write by morning candle-light; my literary business obliging me to be an early riser. Homer demands me: finished, indeed, but the alterations not transcribed: a work to which I am now hastening as fast as possible. The transcript ended, which is likely to amount to a good sizeable volume, I must write a new preface: and then farewell to Homer forever! And if the remainder of my days be a little gilded with the profits of this long and laborious work, I shall not regret the time that I have bestowed on it.

I remain, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours, W. C.

Can you give us any news of Lord Howe's Armada; concerning which we may inquire, as our forefathers did of the Spanish,—"an in cœlum sublata sit, an in Tartarum depressa?"†

The reader may now be anxious to learn some particulars of the projected poem, which has been repeatedly mentioned under the title of *The Four Ages;* a poem to which the mind of Cowper looked eagerly forward, as to a new and highly promising field for his excursive fancy. The idea had been suggested to him in the year 1791, by his clerical neighbor, Mr. Buchanan, of Ravenstone, a small sequestered village within the distance of an easy walk from Weston. This gentleman, who had occasionally enjoyed the gratification of visiting Cowper, suggested to him, with a becoming diffidence, the project of a new poem on the four distinct periods of life—infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. He imparted his ideas to the poet by a letter, in which he observed, with equal modesty and truth, that Cowper was particularly qualified to relish, and to do justice to the subject; a subject which he supposed not hitherto treated expressly, as its importance deserved, by any poet ancient or modern.

Mr. Buchanan added to this letter a brief sketch of contents for the projected composition. This hasty sketch he enlarged, at the request of Cowper. How the poet appreciated the suggestion will appear from the following billet.

TO THE REV. MR. BUCHANAN.

Weston, May 11, 1793.

My dear Sir,—You have sent me a beautiful poem, wanting nothing but metre. I would to heaven that you would give it that requisite yourself; for he who could make the sketch, cannot but be well qualified to finish. But if you will not, I will: provided always nevertheless, that God gives me ability, for it will require no common share to do justice to your conceptions.

I am much yours, W. C.

Your little messenger vanished before I could catch him.

This work, in his first conception of it, was greatly endeared to him, but he soon entertained an apprehension that he should never accomplish it. Writing to his friend of St. Paul's in 1793, the poet said—"*The Four Ages* is a subject that delights me when I think of it: but I am ready to fear, that all my ages will be exhausted before I shall be at leisure to write upon it."

A fragment is all that he has left, for which we refer the reader to the Poems. In his happier days, it would have been expanded in a manner more commensurate with the copiousness of the subject, and the poetical powers of the author.

It may be interesting to add, that a modern poem on the Four Ages of Man was written by M. Werthmuller, a citizen of Zurich, and translated into Latin verse, by Dr. Olstrochi, librarian to the Ambrosian library at Milan. This performance gave rise to another German poem on the Four Ages of Woman, by M. Zacharie, professor of poetry at Brunswick.

The increasing infirmities of Cowper's aged companion, Mrs. Unwin, his filial solicitude to alleviate her sufferings, and the gathering clouds of deeper despondency that began to

* Private correspondence.

† Lord Howe was at this time in pursuit of the French fleet, and absent six weeks, during which the public received no intelligence of his movements. His lordship at length returned, having only seen the enemy, but without having been able to overtake and bring them to action. Though this furnished no argument against him, but rather showed the terror that he inspired, yet some of the wits of the day wrote the following *jeu d'esprit* on the occasion.

When Cæsar triumph'd o'er his Gallic foes,
Three words concise,* his gallant acts disclose;
But Howe, more brief, comprises his in *one*,
And *vidi* tells us all that he has done.

Lord Howe subsequently proved his claim to the whole of this celebrated despatch of Cæsar, by the great victory which he gained off Ushant over the French fleet, June 1, 1794, a victory which forms one of the brightest triumphs of the British navy.

* *Veni, vidi, vici.* I came, I saw, I conquered.

settle on his mind, in the first month of the year 1794, not only rendered it impossible for him to advance in any great original performance, but, to use his own expressive words, in the close of his correspondence with his highly valued friend, Mr. Rose, made all composition either of poetry or prose impracticable. Writing to that friend in January 1794, he says, "I have just ability enough to transcribe, which is all that I have to do at present: God knows that I write, at this moment, under the pressure of sadness not to be described."

It was a spectacle that might awaken compassion in the sternest of human characters, to see the health, the comfort, and the little fortune of a man, so distinguished by intellectual endowments, and by moral excellence, perishing most deplorably. A sight so affecting made many friends of Cowper solicitous and importunate that his declining life should be honorably protected by public munificence. Men of all parties agreed that a pension might be granted to an author of his acknowledged merit, with graceful propriety.

But such is the difficulty of doing real good, experienced even by the great and powerful, or so apt are statesmen to forget the pressing exigence of meritorious individuals, in the distractions of official perplexity, that month after month elapsed, without the accomplishment of so desirable an object.

Imagination can hardly devise any human condition more truly affecting than the state of the poet at this period. His generous and faithful guardian, Mrs. Unwin, who had preserved him through seasons of the severest calamity, was now, with her faculties and fortune impaired, sinking fast into second childhood. The distress of heart that he felt in beholding the afflicting change in a companion so justly dear to him, conspiring with his constitutional melancholy, was gradually undermining the exquisite faculties of his mind. The disinterestedness and affectionate kindness of Lady Hesketh, at this crisis, deserves to be recorded in terms of the highest commendation. With a magnanimity of feeling to which it is difficult to do justice, and to the visible detriment of her health, she nobly devoted herself to the superintendence of a house, whose two interesting inhabitants were almost incapacitated from attending to the ordinary offices of life. Those only who have lived with the superannuated and the melancholy, can properly appreciate the value of such a sacrifice.

The two last of Cowper's letters to Hayley, that breathe a spirit of mental activity and cheerful friendship, were written in the close of the year 1793, and in the beginning of the next. They arose from an accident that it may be proper to relate, before we insert them.

On Hayley's return from Weston, he had given an account of the poet to his old friend, Lord Thurlow. That learned and powerful critic, in speaking of Cowper's Homer, declared himself not satisfied with his version of Hector's admirable prayer in caressing his child. Both ventured on new translations of this prayer, which were immediately sent to Cowper, and the following letters will prove with what just and manly freedom of spirit he was at this time able to criticize the composition of his friends and his own.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 17, 1793.

Oh Jove! and all ye Gods! grant this my son
To prove, like me, pre-eminent in Troy!
In valor such, and firmness of command!
Be he extoll'd, when he returns from fight,
As far his sire's superior! may he slay
His enemy, bring home his gory spoils,
And may his mother's heart o'erflow with joy!

I rose this morning at six o'clock, on purpose to translate this prayer again, and to write to my dear brother. Here you have it, such as it is, not perfectly according to my own liking, but as well as I could make it, and I think better than either yours or Lord Thurlow's. You with your six lines have made yourself stiff and ungraceful, and he with his seven has produced as good prose as heart can wish, but no poetry at all. A scrupulous attention to the letter has spoiled you both; you have neither the spirit nor the manner of Homer. A portion of both may be found, I believe, in my version, but not so much as I could wish—it is better however than the printed one. His lordship's two first lines I cannot very well understand; he seems to me to give a sense to the original that does not belong to it. Hector, I apprehend, does not say, "Grant that he may prove himself my son, and be eminent," &c.,—but "grant that this my son may prove eminent" —which is a material difference. In the latter sense I find the simplicity of an ancient; in the former, that is to say, in the notion of a man proving himself his father's son by similar merit, the finesse and dexterity of a modern. His lordship too makes the man, who gives the young hero his commendation, the person who returns from battle; whereas Homer makes the young hero himself that person, at least if Clarke is a just interpreter, which I suppose is hardly to be disputed.

If my old friend would look into my Preface, he would find a principle laid down there, which perhaps it would not be easy to invalidate, and which properly attended to would equally secure a translation from stiffness and from wildness. The principle I mean is this, "Close, but not so close as to be servile! free, but not so free as to be licentious!" A superstitious fidelity loses the spirit, and a loose

deviation the sense of the translated author—a happy moderation in either case is the only possible way of preserving both.

Thus I have disciplined you both, and now if you please, you may both discipline me. I shall not enter my version in my book till it has undergone your strictures at least, and, should you write to the noble critic again, you are welcome to submit it to his. We are three awkward fellows indeed, if we cannot amongst us make a tolerable good translation of six lines of Homer.

Adieu! W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Jan. 5, 1794.

My dear Hayley,—I have waited, but waited in vain, for a propitious moment when I might give my old friend's objections the consideration they deserve; I shall at last be forced to send a vague answer, unworthy to be sent to a person accustomed, like him, to close reasoning and abstruse discussion; for I rise after ill rest, and with a frame of mind perfectly unsuited to the occasion. I sit too at the window for light's sake, where I am so cold that my pen slips out of my fingers. First, I will give you a translation, *de novo*, of this untranslatable prayer. It is shaped as nearly as I could contrive to his lordship's ideas, but I have little hope that it will satisfy him.

Grant Jove, and all ye Gods, that this my son
Be, as myself have been, illustrious here!
A valiant man! and let him reign in Troy!
May all who witness his return from fight
Hereafter, say—he far excels his sire;
And let him bring back gory trophies, stript
From foes slain by him, to his mother's joy.

Imlac in Rasselas says—I forget to whom, "You have convinced me that it is impossible to be a poet." In like manner I might say to his lordship, you have convinced me that it is impossible to be a translator; to be a translator, on his terms at least, is I am sure impossible. On his terms, I would defy Homer himself, were he alive, to translate the Paradise Lost into Greek. Yet Milton had Homer much in his eye when he composed that poem; whereas Homer never thought of me or my translation. There are minutæ in every language, which, transfused into another, will spoil the version. Such extreme fidelity is in fact unfaithful. Such close resemblance takes away all likeness. The original is elegant, easy, natural; the copy is clumsy, constrained, unnatural: to what is this owing? To the adoption of terms not congenial to your purpose, and of a context, such as no man writing an original work would make use of. Homer is everything that a poet should be. A translation of Homer, so made, will be everything a translation of Homer should not be; because it will be written in no language under heaven. It will be English, and it will be Greek, and therefore it will be neither. He is the man, whoever he be (I do not pretend to be that man myself), he is the man best qualified as a translator of Homer, who has drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius, till he has imbibed their color to the bone, and who, when he is thus dyed through and through, distinguishing between what is essentially Greek, and what may be habited in English, rejects the former, and is faithful to the latter, as far as the purposes of fine poetry will permit, and no farther: this, I think, may be easily proved. Homer is everywhere remarkable either for ease, dignity or energy of expression; for grandeur of conception, and a majestic flow of numbers. If we copy him so closely as to make every one of these excellent properties of his absolutely unattainable, which will certainly be the effect of too close a copy, instead of translating, we murder him. Therefore, after all his lordship has said, I still hold freedom to be an indispensable—freedom, I mean, with respect to the expression; freedom so limited as never to leave behind the *matter;* but at the same time indulged with a sufficient scope to secure the spirit, and as much as possible of the manner. I say as much as possible, because an English manner must differ from a Greek one, in order to be graceful, and for this there is no remedy. Can an ungraceful, awkward translation of Homer be a good one? No: but a graceful, easy, natural, faithful version of him, will not that be a good one? Yes: allow me but this, and I insist upon it, that such a one may be produced on my principles, and can be produced on no other.

I have not had time to criticise his lordship's other version. You know how little time I have for anything, and can tell him so.

Adieu! my dear brother. I have now tired both you and myself; and with the love of the whole trio, remain yours ever,

W. C.

Reading his lordship's sentiments over again, I am inclined to think, that in all I have said, I have only given him back the same in other terms. He disallows both the absolute *free*, and the absolute *close*—so do I, and, if I understand myself, I said so in my preface. He wishes to recommend a medium, though he will not call it so—so do I; only we express it differently. What is it, then, that we dispute about? My head is not good enough to-day to discover.

These letters were followed by such a silence on the part of Cowper, as excited the

severest apprehensions, which were painfully confirmed by the intelligence conveyed in the ensuing letter:—

FROM THE REV. MR. GREATHEED—TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Newport Pagnel, April 8, 1794.

Dear Sir,—Lady Hesketh's correspondence acquainted you with the melancholy relapse of our dear friend at Weston; but I am uncertain whether you know, that in the last fortnight he has refused food of every kind, except now and then a very small piece of toasted bread dipped generally in water, sometimes mixed with a little wine. This, her ladyship informs me, was the case till last Saturday, since when he has eat a little at each family meal. He persists in refusing such medicines as are indispensable to his state of body. In such circumstances, his long continuance in life cannot be expected. How devoutly to be wished is the alleviation of his danger and distress! You, dear sir, who know so well the worth of our beloved and admired friend, sympathise with his affliction, and deprecate his loss doubtless in no ordinary degree: you have already most effectually expressed and proved the warmth of your friendship. I cannot think that anything but your society would have been sufficient, during the infirmity under which his mind has long been oppressed, to have supported him against the shock of Mrs. Unwin's paralytic attack. I am certain that nothing else could have prevailed upon him to undertake the journey to Eartham. You have succeeded where his other friends knew they could not, and where they apprehended no one could. How natural, therefore, nay, how reasonable, is it for them to look to you, as most likely to be instrumental, under the blessing of God, for relief in the present distressing and alarming crisis! It is indeed scarcely attemptable to ask any person to take such a journey, and involve himself in so melancholy a scene, with an uncertainty of the desired success; increased as the apparent difficulty is by dear Mr. Cowper's aversion to all company, and by poor Mrs. Unwin's mental and bodily infirmities. On these accounts Lady Hesketh dares not ask it of you, rejoiced as she would be at your arrival. Am I not, dear sir, a very presumptuous person, who, in the face of all opposition, dare do this? I am emboldened by those two powerful supporters, conscience and experience. Was I at Eartham, I would certainly undertake the labor I presume to recommend, for the bare possibility of restoring Mr. Cowper to himself, to his friends, to the public, and to God.

Hayley, on the receipt of this letter, lost no time in repairing to Weston; but his unhappy friend was too much overwhelmed by his oppressive malady to show even the least glimmering of satisfaction at the appearance of a guest whom he used to receive with the most lively expressions of affectionate delight.

It is the nature of this tremendous melancholy, not only to enshroud and stifle the finest faculties of the mind, but it suspends, and apparently annihilates, for a time, the strongest and best-rooted affections of the heart.

Lady Hesketh, profiting by Hayley's presence, quitted her charge for a few days, that she might have a personal conference with Dr. Willis. A friendly letter from Lord Thurlow to that celebrated physician had requested his attention to the highly interesting sufferer. Dr. Willis prescribed for Cowper, and saw him at Weston, but not with that success and felicity which made his medical skill on another most awful occasion the source of national delight and exultation.

Indeed, the extraordinary state of Cowper appeared to abound with circumstances very unfavorable to his mental relief. The daily sight of a being reduced to such a deplorable imbecility as now overwhelmed Mrs. Unwin, was in itself sufficient to plunge a tender spirit into extreme melancholy: yet to separate two friends, so long accustomed to minister, with the purest and most vigilant benevolence, to the infirmities of each other, was a measure so pregnant with complicated distraction, that it could not be advised or attempted. It remained only to palliate the suffering of each in their present most pitiable condition, and to trust in the mercy of that God, who had supported them together through periods of very dark affliction, though not so doubly deplorable as the present.

Who can contemplate this distressing spectacle without recalling the following pathetic exclamation in the Sampson Agonistes of Milton?

God of our fathers, what is man?

. . . . . .

Since such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned;

. . . . . .

Yet towards these thus dignified, thou oft
Amidst their height of noon, [regard
Changest thy count'nance, and thy hand with no
Of highest favors past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

. . . . . .

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion!
What do I beg? How hast thou dealt already!
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn,
His labors, for thou canst, to peaceful end!

It was on the 23d of April, 1794, in one of those melancholy mornings, when his kind and affectionate relation, Lady Hesketh, and

Hayley, were watching together over this dejected sufferer, that a letter from Lord Spencer arrived at Weston, to announce the intended grant of a pension from his Majesty to Cowper. of 300*l.* per annum, rendered payable to his friend Mr. Rose, as the trustee of Cowper. This intelligence produced in the friends of the poet very lively emotions of delight, yet blended with pain almost as powerful; for it was painful, in no trifling degree, to reflect that these desirable smiles of good fortune could not impart even a faint glimmering of joy to the dejected poet.

From the time when Hayley left his unhappy friend at Weston, in the spring of the year 1794, he remained there under the tender vigilance of Lady Hesketh, till the latter end of July, 1795: a long season of the darkest depression! in which the best medical advice, and the influence of time, appeared equally unable to lighten that afflictive burthen which pressed incessantly on his spirits.

It was under these circumstances that my revered brother-in-law, with a generous disinterestedness and affection that must ever endear him to the admirers of Cowper, determined, with Lady Hesketh's concurrence, to remove the poet and his afflicted companion into Norfolk. In adopting this plan, he did not contemplate more than a year's absence from Weston: but what was intended to be only temporary, proved in the sequel to be a final removal.

Few events could have been more painful to Cowper than a separation from his beloved Weston. Every object was familiar to his eye, and had long engaged the affections of his heart. Its beautiful scenery had been traced with all the minuteness of description and the glow of poetic fancy. The slow-winding Ouse, "bashful, yet impatient to be seen," was henceforth to glide "in its sinuous course" unperceived. The spacious meads, the lengthened colonnade, the proud alcove, and the sound of the sweet village-bells—these memorials of past happy days were to be seen and heard no more. All have felt the pang excited by the separation or loss of friends; but who has not also experienced that even trees have tongues, and that every object in nature knows how to plead its empire over the heart?

What Cowper's sensations were on this occasion, may be collected from the following little incident.

On the morning of his departure from Weston, he wrote the following lines in pencil on the back of the shutter in his bedroom.

"Farewell, dear scenes, forever closed to me!
Oh! for what sorrows must I now exchange you!"

These lines have been carefully preserved as the expressive memorial of his feelings on leaving Weston. Nor can the following little poem fail to excite interest, not only as being the last original production which he composed at Weston, but from its deep and unaffected pathos. It is addressed to Mrs. Unwin. No language can exhibit a specimen of verse more exquisitely tender.

TO MARY.

The twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast,
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disus'd, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For, though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art,
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two, yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But, ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And, should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

On Tuesday, the twenty-eighth of July,

1795, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin removed, under the care and guidance of Mr. Johnson, from Weston to North-Tuddenham, in Norfolk, by a journey of three days, passing through Cambridge without stopping there. In the evening of the first day they rested at the village of Eaton, near St. Neot's. Cowper walked with his young kinsman in the churchyard by moonlight, and spoke with much composure on the subject of Thomson's Seasons, and the circumstances under which they were probably written. This conversation was almost his last glimmering of cheerfulness.

At North-Tuddenham the travellers were accommodated with a commodious, untenanted parsonage-house, by the kindness of the Rev. Leonard Shelford. Here they resided till the nineteenth of August. It was the considerate intention of Mr. Johnson not to remove them immediately to his own house, in the town of East-Dereham, lest the situation in a market-place should be distressing to the tender spirits of Cowper.

In their new temporary residence they were received by Miss Johnson and Miss Perowne, whose gentle and sympathizing spirit peculiarly qualified them to discharge so delicate an office, and to alleviate the sufferings of the dejected poet.

Severe as his depressive malady appeared at this period, he was still able to bear considerable exercise, and, before he left Tuddenham, he walked with Mr. Johnson to the neighboring village of Mattishall, on a visit to his cousin, Mrs. Bodham. On surveying his own portrait by Abbot, in the house of that lady, he clasped his hands in a paroxysm of pain, and uttered a vehement wish, that his present sensations might be such as they were when that picture was painted.

In August 1795, Mr. Johnson conducted his two invalids to Mundsley, a village on the Norfolk coast, in the hope that a situation by the sea-side might prove salutary and amusing to Cowper. They continued to reside there till October, but without any apparent benefit to the health of the interesting sufferer.

He had long relinquished epistolary intercourse with his most intimate friends, but his tender solicitude to hear some tidings of his favorite Weston induced him, in September, to write a letter to Mr. Buchanan. It shows the severity of his depression, but proves also that transient gleams of pleasure could occasionally break through the brooding darkness of melancholy.

He begins with a poetical quotation:

"To interpose a little ease,
Let my frail thoughts dally with false surmise!"

"I will not forget, for a moment, that to whomsoever I may address myself, a letter from me can no otherwise be welcome than as a curiosity. To you, sir, I address this; urged to it by extreme penury of employment, and the desire I feel to learn something of what is doing, and has been done, at Weston (my beloved Weston!) since I left it.

"The coldness of these blasts, even in the hottest days, has been such, that, added to the irritation of the salt-spray, with which they are always charged, they have occasioned me an inflammation in the eye-lids, which threatened a few days since to confine me entirely, but by absenting myself as much as possible from the beach, and guarding my face with an umbrella, that inconvenience is in some degree abated. My chamber commands a very near view of the ocean, and the ships at high water approach the coast so closely, that a man furnished with better eyes than mine might, I doubt not, discern the sailors from the window. No situation, at least when the weather is clear and bright, can be pleasanter; which you will easily credit, when I add, that it imparts something a little resembling pleasure even to me.—Gratify me with news of Weston! If Mr. Gregson and your neighbors the Courtenays are there, mention me to them in such terms as you see good. Tell me if my poor birds are living! I never see the herbs I used to give them, without a recollection of them, and sometimes am ready to gather them, forgeting that I am not at home. Pardon this intrusion!

"Mrs. Unwin continues much as usual.

"Mundsley, Sept. 5, 1795."

Mr. Buchanan endeavored, with great tenderness and ingenuity, to allure his dejected friend to prolong a correspondence, that seemed to promise some little alleviation to his melancholy; but this distressing malady baffled all the various expedients that could be devised to counteract its overwhelming influence.

Much hope was entertained from air and exercise, with frequent change of scene.—In September, Mr. Johnson conducted his kinsman (to the promotion of whose recovery he devoted his most unwearied efforts) to take a survey of Dunham-Lodge, a seat at that time vacant; it is situated on high ground, in a park, about four miles from Swaffham. Cowper spoke of it as a house rather too spacious for him, yet such as he was not unwilling to inhabit—a remark which induced Mr. Johnson, at a subsequent period, to become the tenant of this mansion, as a scene more eligible for Cowper than the town of Dereham.—This town they also surveyed in their excursion; and, after passing a night there, returned to Mundsley, which they

quitted for the season on the seventh of October.

They removed immediately to Dereham: but left it in the course of a month for Dunham-Lodge, which now became their settled residence.

The spirits of Cowper were not sufficiently revived to allow him to resume either his pen or his books; but the kindness of his young kinsman continued to furnish him with inexhaustible amusement, by reading to him almost incessantly; and, although he was not led to converse on what he heard, yet it failed not to rivet his attention, and so to prevent his afflicted mind from preying on itself.

In April, 1796, Mrs. Unwin, whose infirmities continued to engage the tender attention of Cowper, even in his darkest periods of depression, received a visit from her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Powley. On their departure, Mr. Johnson assumed the office which Mrs. Powley had tenderly performed for her venerable parent, and regularly read a chapter in the Bible every morning to Mrs. Unwin before she rose. It was the invariable custom of Cowper to visit his poor old friend the moment he had finished his breakfast, and to remain in her apartment while the chapter was read.

In June, the pressure of his melancholy appeared in some degree alleviated, for, on Mr. Johnson's receiving the edition of Pope's Homer, published by Wakefield, Cowper eagerly seized the book, and began to read the notes to himself with visible interest. They awakened his attention to his own version of Homer. In August, he deliberately engaged in a revisal of the whole, and for some time produced almost sixty new lines a day.

This mental occupation animated all his intimate friends with a most lively hope of his progressive recovery. But autumn repressed the hope that summer had excited.

In September the family removed from Dunham-Lodge to try again the influence of the sea-side, in their favorite village of Mundsley.

Cowper walked frequently by the sea, but no apparent benefit arose, no mild relief from the incessant pressure of melancholy. He had relinquished his Homer again, and could not yet be induced to resume it.

Towards the end of October, this interesting party retired from the coast to the house of Mr. Johnson, in Dereham—a house now chosen for their winter residence, as Dunham-Lodge appeared to them too dreary.

The long and exemplary life of Mrs. Unwin was drawing towards a close—the powers of nature were gradually exhausted, and on the seventeenth of December she ended a troubled existence distinguished by a sublime spirit of piety and friendship, that shone through long periods of calamity, and continued to glimmer through the distressful twilight of her declining faculties. Her death was calm and tranquil. Cowper saw her about half an hour before the moment of expiration, which passed without a struggle or a groan, as the clock was striking one in the afternoon.

On the morning of that day, he said to the servant who opened the window of his chamber, "Sally, is there life above stairs?" A striking proof of his bestowing incessant attention on the sufferings of his aged friend, although he had long appeared almost totally absorbed in his own.

In the dusk of the evening he attended Mr. Johnson to survey the corpse; and after looking at it a very few moments he started suddenly away, with a vehement but unfinished sentence of passionate sorrow. He spoke of her no more.

She was buried by torch-light, on the twenty-third of December, in the north aisle of Dereham church; and two of her friends, impressed with a just and deep sense of her extraordinary merit, have raised a marble tablet to her memory with the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF MARY,

WIDOW OF THE REV. MORLEY UNWIN,

AND

MOTHER OF THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORN UNWIN,

BORN AT ELY, 1724.

BURIED IN THIS CHURCH 1796.

Trusting in God, with all her heart and mind
This woman prov'd magnanimously kind;
Endur'd affliction's desolating hail,
And watch'd a poet thro' misfortune's vale.
Her spotless dust, angelic guards, defend!
It is the dust of Unwin, Cowper's friend!
That single title in itself is fame,
For all who read his verse revere her name.

It might have been anticipated that the death of Mrs. Unwin, in Cowper's enfeebled state, would have proved too severe a shock to his agitated nerves. But it is mercifully ordained that, while declining years incapacitate us for trials, they, at the same time, weaken the sensibility to suffering, and thereby render us less accessible to the influence of sorrow. It may be regarded as an instance of providential mercy to this afflicted poet, that his aged friend, whose life he had so long considered as essential to his own, was taken from him at a time when the pressure of his malady, a perpetual low fever, both of body and mind, had, in a great degree, diminished the native energy of his faculties and affections.

Owing to these causes, Cowper was so far

preserved in this season of trial, that, instead of mourning the loss of a person in whose life he had seemed to live, all perception of that loss was mercifully taken from him; and, from the moment when he hurried away from the inanimate object of his filial attachment, he appeared to have no memory of her having existed, for he never asked a question concerning her funeral, nor ever mentioned her name.

Towards the summer of 1797, his bodily health appeared to improve, but not to such a degree as to restore any comfortable activity to his mind. In June he wrote a brief letter to Hayley, but such as too forcibly expressed the cruelty of his distemper.

The process of digestion never passed regularly in his frame during the years that he resided in Norfolk. Medicine appeared to have little or no influence on his complaint, and his aversion at the sight of it was extreme.

From asses' milk, of which he began a course on the twenty-first of June in this year, he gained a considerable acquisition of bodily strength, and was enabled to bear an airing in an open carriage, before breakfast, with Mr. Johnson.

A depression of mind, which suspended the studies of a writer so eminently endeared to the public, was considered by men of piety and learning as a national misfortune, and several individuals of this description, though personally unknown to Cowper, wrote to him in the benevolent hope that expressions of friendly praise, from persons who could be influenced only by the most laudable motives in bestowing it, might re-animate his dejected spirit. Among these might be enumerated Dr. Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff, who kindly addressed him in the language of encouragement and of soothing consolation; but the pressure of his malady had now made him utterly deaf to the most honorable praise.

He had long discontinued the revisal of his Homer, when his kinsman, dreading the effect of the cessation of bodily exercise upon his mind during a long winter, resolved, if possible, to engage him in the revisal of this work. One morning, therefore, after breakfast, in the month of September, he placed the Commentators on the table, one by one; namely, Villoison, Barnes, and Clarke, opening them all, together with the poet's translation, at the place where he had left off a twelvemonth before, but talking with him, as he paced the room, upon a very different subject, namely, the impossibility of the things befalling him which his imagination had represented; when, as his companion had wished, he said to him, "And are you sure that I shall be here till the book you are reading is finished?" "Quite sure," replied his kinsman, "and that you will also be here to complete the revisal of your Homer," pointing to the books, "if you will resume it to day." As he repeated these words he left the room, rejoicing in the well-known token of their having sunk into the poet's mind, namely, his seating himself on the sofa, taking up one of the books, and saying in a low and plaintive voice, "I may as well do this, for I can do nothing else."*

In this labor he persevered, oppressed as he was by indisposition, till March 1799. On Friday evening, the eighth of that month, he completed his revisal of the Odyssey, and the next morning wrote part of a new preface.

To watch over the disordered health of afflicted genius, and to lead a powerful, but oppressed, spirit by gentle encouragement, to exert itself in salutary occupation, is an office that requires a very rare union of tenderness, intelligence, and fortitude. To contemplate and minister to a great mind, in a state that borders on mental desolation, is like surveying, in the midst of a desert, the tottering ruins of palaces and temples, where the faculties of the spectator are almost absorbed in wonder and regret, and where every step is taken with awful apprehension.

Hayley, in alluding to Dr. Johnson's kind and affectionate offices, at this period, bears the following honorable testimony to his merits, which we are happy in transcribing. "It seemed as if Providence had expressly formed the young kinsman of Cowper to prove exactly such a guardian of his declining years as the peculiar exigencies of his situation required. I never saw the human being that could, I think, have sustained the delicate and arduous office (in which the inexhaustible virtues of Mr. Johnson persevered to the last) through a period so long, with an equal portion of unwearied tenderness and unshaken fidelity. A man who wanted sensibility would have renounced the duty; and a man endowed with a particle too much of that valuable, though perilous, quality, must have felt his own health utterly undermined, by an excess of sympathy with the sufferings perpetually in his sight. Mr. Johnson has completely discharged, perhaps, the most trying of human duties; and I trust he will forgive me for this public declaration, that, in his mode of discharging it, he has merited the most cordial esteem from all who love the memory of Cowper. Even a stranger may consider it as a strong proof of his tender dexterity in soothing and guiding the afflicted poet, that he was able to engage him steadily to pursue and finish the revisal and correction of his Homer, during a long period of bodily and mental sufferings, when his troubled mind recoiled from all intercourse

* Sketch of the Life of Cowper.

with his most intimate friends, and labored under a morbid abhorrence of all cheerful exertion."

In the summer of 1798, his kinsman was induced to vary his plan of remaining for some months in the marine village of Mundsley, and thought it more eligible to make frequent visits from Dereham to the coast, passing a week at a time by the sea-side.

Cowper, in his poem on "Retirement," seems to inform us what his own sentiments were, in a season of health, concerning the regimen most proper for the disease of melancholy.

Virtuous and faithful Heberden, whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.

The frequent change of place, and the magnificence of marine scenery, produced at times a little relief to his depressed spirits. On the 7th of June 1798, he surveyed the light-house at Happisburgh, and expressed some pleasure on beholding, through a telescope, several ships at a distance. Yet, in his usual walk with his companion by the sea-side, he exemplified but too forcibly his own affecting description of melancholy silence:

That silent tongue
Could give advice, could censure, or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend;
Renounc'd alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short:
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And, like a summer-brook, are past away.

On the twenty-fourth of July, Cowper had the honor of a visit from a lady, for whom he had long entertained affectionate respect, the Dowager Lady Spencer—and it was rather remarkable, that on the very morning she called upon him he had begun his revisal of the Odyssey, which was originally inscribed to her. Such an incident in a happier season would have produced a very enlivening effect on his spirits: but, in his present state, it had not even the power to lead him into any free conversation with his distinguished visitor.

The only amusement that he appeared to admit without reluctance was the reading of his kinsman, who, indefatigable in the supply of such amusement, had exhausted a successive series of works of fiction, and at this period began reading to the poet his own works. To these he listened also in silence, and heard all his poems recited in order, till the reader arrived at the history of John Gilpin, which he begged not to hear. Mr. Johnson proceeded to his manuscript poems: to these he willingly listened, but made not a single remark on any.

In October, 1798, the pressure of his melancholy seemed to be mitigated in some little degree, for he exerted himself so far as to write the following letter, without solicitation, to Lady Hesketh.

Dear Cousin,—You describe delightful scenes, but you describe them to one, who, if he even saw them, could receive no delight from them: who has a faint recollection, and so faint, as to be like an almost forgotten dream, that once he was susceptible of pleasure from such causes. The country that you have had in prospect has been always famed for its beauties; but the wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of nature, even under the disadvantage of her most ordinary dress, will have no eyes to admire her in any.

In one day, in one minute, I should rather have said, she became an universal blank to me, and though from a different cause, yet with an effect as difficult to remove as blindness itself.

. . . . .

Mundsley, Oct. 13, 1798.

On his return from Mundsley to Dereham, in an evening towards the end of October, Cowper, with Miss Perowne and Mr. Johnson, was overturned in a post-chaise: he discovered no terror on the occasion, and escaped without injury from the accident.

In December he received a visit from his highly esteemed friend, Sir John Throckmorton, but his malady was at that time so oppressive that it rendered him almost insensible to the kind solicitude of friendship.

He still continued to exercise the powers of his astonishing mind: upon his finishing the revisal of his Homer, in March, 1799, his kinsman endeavored in the gentlest manner to lead him into new literary occupation.

For this purpose, on the eleventh of March he laid before him the paper containing the commencement of his poem on "The Four Ages." Cowper altered a few lines; he also added a few, but soon observed to his kind attendant—"that it was too great a work for him to attempt in his present situation."

At supper Mr. Johnson suggested to him several literary projects that he might execute more easily. He replied—"that he had just thought of six Latin verses, and if he could compose anything it must be in pursuing that composition."

The next morning he wrote the six verses he had mentioned, and subsequently added the remainder, entitling the poem, "Montes Glaciales."

It proved a versification of a circumstance recorded in a newspaper, which had been read to him a few weeks before, without his appearing to notice it. This poem he translated into English verse, on the nineteenth of March, to oblige Miss Perowne. Both the original and the translation appear in the Poems.

On the twentieth of March he wrote the stanzas entitled "The Castaway," founded on an anecdote in Anson's Voyage, which his memory suggested to him, although he had not looked into the book for many years.

As this poem is the last original production from the pen of Cowper, we shall introduce it here, persuaded that it will be read with an interest proportioned to the extraordinary pathos of the subject, and the still more extraordinary powers of the poet, whose lyre could sound so forcibly, unsilenced by the gloom of the darkest distemper, that was conducting him, by slow gradations, to the shadow of death.

THE CASTAWAY.

Obscurest night involv'd the sky;
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent.
He lov'd them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the 'whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But wag'd with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless, per force,
They left their out-cast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succor yet they could afford;
And such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship, nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean self-upheld:
And so long he with unspent pow'r
His destiny repell'd:
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cry'd—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in ev'ry blast,
Could catch the sound no more.
For then by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him, but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tell his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalize the dead

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate!
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date,
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And 'whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

In August he translated this poem into Latin verse. In October he went with Miss Perowne and Mr. Johnson to survey a larger house in Dereham, which he preferred to their present residence, and in which the family were settled in the following December.

Though his corporeal strength was now evidently declining, the urgent persuasion of his kinsman induced him to amuse his mind with frequent composition. Between August and December, he wrote all the translations from various Latin and Greek epigrams, which the reader will find in the present volume.

In his new residence, he amused himself with translating a few fables of Gay's into Latin verse. The fable which he used to recite when a child—"The Hare and many Friends"—became one of his latest amusements.

These Latin fables were all written in January, 1800. Towards the end of that month, Hayley requested him to new-model a passage in his Homer, relating to the curious monument of ancient sculpture, so graecefully described by Homer, called the Cretan Dance. This being the last effort of his pen, and the passage being interesting, as a representation of ancient manners, we here insert it.

To these the glorious artist added next
A varied dance, resembling that of old
In Crete's broad isle, by Dædalus, compos'd
For bright-hair'd Ariadne. There the youths
And youth-alluring maidens, hand in hand,
Dane'd jocund, ev'ry maiden neat attir'd
In finest linen, and the youths in vests
Well-woven, glossy as the glaze of oil.
These all wore garlands, and bright falcions those,
Of burnish'd gold, in silver trappings hung;—
They, with well-tutor'd step, now nimbly ran
The circle, swift, as when, before his wheel
Seated, the potter twirls it with both hands
For trial of its speed; now, crossing quick,
They pass'd at once into each other's place.
A circling crowd surveyed the lovely dance,

Delighted; two, the leading pair, their heads
With graceful inclination bowing oft,
Pass'd swift betwen them, and began the song.
See *Cowper's Version*, Book xviii.

On the very day that this endearing mark of his kindness reached Hayley, a dropsical appearance in his legs induced Mr. Johnson to have recourse to fresh medical assistance. Cowper was with great difficulty persuaded to take the remedies prescribed, and to try the exercise of a post-chaise, an exercise which he could not bear beyond the twenty-second of February.

In March, when his decline became more and more visible, he was visited by Mr. Rose. He hardly expressed any pleasure on the arrival of a friend whom he had so long and so tenderly regarded, yet he showed evident signs of regret at his departure, on the sixth of April.

The illness and impending death of his talented son precluded Hayley from sharing with Mr. Rose in these last marks of affectionate attention towards the man, whose genius and virtues they had once contemplated together with mutual veneration and delight; whose approaching dissolution they felt, not only as an irreparable loss to themselves, but as a national misfortune. On the nineteenth of April, Dr. Johnson remarks, the weakness of this truly pitiable sufferer had so much increased, that his kinsman apprehended his death to be near. Adverting, therefore, to the affliction, as well of body as of mind, which his beloved inmate was then enduring, he ventured to speak of his approaching dissolution as the signal of his deliverance from both these miseries. After a pause of a few moments, which was less interrupted by the objections of his desponding relative than he had dared to hope, he proceeded to an observation more consolatory still; namely, that, in the world to which he was hastening, a merciful Redeemer had prepared unspeakable happiness for all his children—and therefore for him. To the first part of this sentence, he had listened with composure, but the concluding words were no sooner uttered, than his passionately expressed entreaties, that his companion would desist from any further observations of a similar kind, clearly proved that, though it was on the eve of being invested with angelic light, the darkness of delusion still veiled his spirit.*

On Sunday, the twentieth, he seemed a little revived.

On Monday he appeared dying, but recovered so much as to eat a slight dinner.

Tuesday and Wednesday he grew apparently weaker every hour.

On Thursday he sat up as usual in the evening.

* Sketch of the Life of Cowper, by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of the night, when exceedingly exhausted, Miss Perowne offered him some refreshment. He rejected it with these words, the very last that he was heard to utter, "What can it signify?"

Dr. Johnson closes the affecting account in the following words.

"At five in the morning of Friday 25th, a deadly change in his features was observed to take place. He remained in an insensible state from that time till about five minutes before five in the afternoon, when he ceased to breathe. And in so mild and gentle a manner did his spirit take its flight, that though the writer of this Memoir, his medical attendant Mr. Woods, and three other persons, were standing at the foot and side of the bed, with their eyes fixed upon his dying countenance, the precise moment of his departure was unobserved by any."

From this mournful period, till the features of his deceased friend were closed from his view, the expression which the kinsman of Cowper observed in them, and which he was affectionately delighted to suppose "an index of the last thoughts and enjoyments of his soul, in its gradual escape from the depths of despondence, was that of calmness and composure, mingled, as it were, with holy surprise."

He was buried in St. Edmund's Chapel, in the church of East Dereham, on Saturday, May 2nd, attended by several of his relations.

He left a will, but without appointing his executor. The administration, therefore, of the little property he possessed devolved on his affectionate relative, Lady Hesketh; but not having been carried into effect by that Lady, the office, on her decease, was undertaken by his cousin german, Mrs. Bodham.

Lady Hesketh raised a marble tablet to his memory, with the following inscription from the pen of Hayley:

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM COWPER ESQ.
BORN IN HERTFORDSHIRE,
1731.
BURIED IN THIS CHURCH.

Ye, who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favorite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise;
His highest honors to the heart belong;
His virtues form'd the magic of his song.

We have now conducted the endeared subject of this biography through the various scenes of his chequered and eventful life, till its last solemn termination; and it is impos-

sible that any other feelings can have been awakened than those of admiration for his genius, homage for his virtues, and profound sympathy for his sufferings. It was fully anticipated by his friends, that the hour of final liberation, at least, would have been cheered by that calm sense of the divine presence, which is the delightful foretaste of eternal rest and glory. Young beautifully observes:

The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven.

The Bible proclaims the same animating truth. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace!" The divine faithfulness is an ample security for the fulfilment of these declarations; but the promises of God, firm and unchangeable as they are in themselves, after all, can be realized only in a mind disposed for their reception; as the light cannot pass through a medium that is incapable of admitting it. Such, alas! is the influence of physical causes and of a morbid temperament on the inward perceptions of the soul, that it is possible to be a child of God, without a consciousness of the blessing, and to have a title to a crown, and yet feel to be immured in the depths of a dungeon.

The consolation to the friends of the unhappy sufferer, if not to the patient himself, is, that the chains are of his own forging, and that, if he had but the discernment to know it, the delusion would promptly vanish, and the peace of God flow into the soul like a river.

That such was the case with Cowper, no one can doubt for a moment. A species of mental aberration, on a particular subject, involved his mind in a strange and sad delusion. The Sun of Righteousness, therefore, failed in his last moments to impart its refreshing light and comfort, because the cloud of despair intervened, and obscured the setting beams of grace and glory.

Who can contemplate so mysterious a process of the mind, without exclaiming—

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man!
How passing wonder He, who made him such!
Who centred in our make such strange extremes!

It is impossible to dwell on the manner of Cowper's death, and not to be reminded of the wish cherished by himself on this subject, and recorded so impressively in the following lines:

So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care,
Or stain'd with guilt, beneficient, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and so, at last,
My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
*Beneath the turf that I have often trod.**

God mercifully granted the best portion of his prayer, but saw fit to deny the rest. No conscious guilt or open transgression stained his life; his heart was the seat of every beneficent and kind affection. As an author, he was blessed with an honorable career of usefulness; the public voice conferred upon him the title to immortality, and succeeding times have ratified the claim. But if perception be necessary to enjoyment, he was not "peaceful in his end;" for he died without this conviction. He did not, like Elijah, ascend in a chariot of fire; it was his lot rather to realize the quaint remark of some of the old divines, "God sometimes puts his children to bed in the dark," that they may have nothing whereof to boast; that their salvation may appear to be more fully the result of his own free and unmerited mercy, and that in this, as in all things, he may be known to act as a sovereign, who "giveth no account of his matters."†

But the severest exercises of faith are always mingled with some gracious purpose; and God may perhaps see fit to appoint these dark dispensations, that the transition into eternity may be more glorious; and that the emancipated spirit, bursting the shackles of death and sin, and delivered from the bondage of its fears, may rise with a nobler triumph from the depths of humiliation into the very presence-chamber of its God.

These remarks are so closely connected with the subject of Cowper's afflicting malady, that the time is now arrived when it is necessary to enter into a more detailed view of its nature and character; to trace its origin and progress, and to disengage this complicated question from that prejudice and misrepresentation which have so inveterately attached to it. At the same time, it is with profound reluctance that the Editor enters upon this painful theme, from a deep conviction that it does not form a proper subject for discussion, and that the veil of secrecy is never more suitably employed, than when it is thrown over infirmities which are too sacred to meet the gaze of public observation. This inquiry is now, however, no longer optional. Cowper himself has, unfortunately, suffered in the public estimation by the manner in which his earliest biographer, Hayley, has presented him before the public. By suppressing some very important letters, which tended to elucidate his real character, an air of mystery has been imparted which deeply affects its consistency: while, by attributing what he could not sufficiently conceal

* The Task, book vi. † Job xxxiii. 13.

of the malady of the poet to the operation of religious causes, truth has been violated, and an unmerited wound inflicted upon religion itself. Thus Hayley, from motives of delicacy most probably, or from misapprehension of the subject, has committed a double error; while others, misled by his authority, have unhappily aided in propagating the delusion.

The Private Correspondence of Cowper, which is exclusively incorporated with the present edition, is of the first importance, as it dispels the mystery previously attached to his character. All that now remains is, to establish by undeniable evidence that, so far from religious causes having been instrumental to his malady, the order of events and the testimony of positive facts both militate again such a conclusion.

For this purpose, we shall now introduce to the notice of the reader, copious extracts from the Memoir of Cowper, written by himself, containing the particulars of his life, from his earliest years to the period of his malady and subsequent recovery. This remarkable document was intended to record his sense of the Divine mercy in the preservation of his life, during a season of disastrous feeling; and to perpetuate the remembrance of that grace which overruled this event, in so remarkable a manner, to his best and eternal interests. He designed this document principally for the perusal of Mrs. Unwin, to whose hands it was most confidentially entrusted. A copy was also presented to Mr. Newton, and ultimately to Dr. Johnson; but the parties were strictly enjoined never to allow another copy to be taken. By some means the Memoir at length found its way before the public. On this ground the editor feels less difficulty in communicating its purport; as the seal of secrecy has been already broken, though in the estimation of Dr. Johnson and his friends, in so unauthorized a manner. Its publication, however has been unquestionably attended by one beneficial result, in having established, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that so far from Cowper's religious views having been the source of his malady, they were the first occasion and instrument of its cure.*

The Memoir is interesting in another respect. It elucidates the early events of Cowper's history. One important subject is however omitted, his attachment to Miss Theodora Cowper, the failure of which formed no small ingredient in the disappointments of his early life. This omission we shall be enabled to supply.

With these preliminary remarks we shall now introduce this curious and remarkable document, simply suppressing those portions which violate the feelings, without being essential to the substance of the narrative.

* The following is the result of the information obtained by the Editor on this subject, after the minutest inquiry. A lady who was on a visit at Mr. Newton's, in London, saw, it is said, this Memoir of Cowper lying, among other papers, on the table. She was led to peruse it, and felt a deeper interest in the contents, from having herself been recently recovered from a state of derangement. She privately copied the manuscript, and communicated it to some friend. It was finally published by a pious character, who considered that in so doing he exonerated the religious views of Cowper from the charge of having been instrumental to his malady.

MEMOIR OF THE EARLY LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I CANNOT recollect, that, till the month of December, in the thirty-second year of my life, I had ever any serious impressions of the religious kind, or at all bethought myself of the things of my salvation, except in two or three instances. The first was of so transitory a nature, and passed when I was so very young, that, did I not intend what follows for a history of my heart, so far as religion has been its object, I should hardly mention it.

At six years old, I was taken from the nursery, and from the immediate care of a most indulgent mother, and sent to a considerable school in Bedfordshire.* Here I had hardships of different kinds to conflict with, which I felt more sensibly in proportion to the tenderness with which I had been treated at home. But my chief affliction consisted in my being singled out from all the other boys by a lad about fifteen years of age, as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper. I choose to forbear a particular recital of the many acts of barbar-

* Market Street. Hayley places this village in Hertfordshire, and Cowper in Bedfordshire. Both are right, for the public road or street forms a boundary between the two counties.

ity with which he made it his business continually to persecute me: it will be sufficient to say, that he had, by his savage treatment of me, impressed such a dread of his figure upon my mind, that I well remember being afraid to lift up my eyes upon him, higher than his knees; and that I knew him by his shoe-buckles better than any other part of his dress. May the Lord pardon him, and may we meet in glory!

One day, as I was sitting alone on a bench in the school, melancholy, and almost ready to weep at the recollection of what I had already suffered, and expecting at the same time my tormentor every moment, these words of the Psalmist came into my mind, "I will not be afraid of what man can do unto me." I applied this to my own case, with a degree of trust and confidence in God that would have been no disgrace to a much more experienced Christian. Instantly I perceived in myself a briskness of spirits, and a cheerfulness, which I had never before experienced,—and took several paces up and down the room with joyful alacrity—*his* gift in whom I trusted. Happy had it been for me, if this early effort towards a dependence on the blessed God had been frequently repeated by me. But, alas! it was the first and last instance of the kind between infancy and manhood. The cruelty of this boy, which he had long practised in so secret a manner that no creature suspected it, was at length discovered. He was expelled from the school, and I was taken from it.

From hence, at eight years old, I was sent to Mr. D., an eminent surgeon and oculist, having very weak eyes, and being in danger of losing one of them. I continued a year in this family, where religion was neither known nor practised; and from thence was despatched to Westminster. Whatever seeds of religion I might carry thither, before my seven years' apprenticeship to the classics was expired, they were all marred and corrupted; the duty of the school-boy swallowed up every other; and I acquired Latin and Greek at the expense of a knowledge much more important.*

Here occurred the second instance of serious consideration. As I was crossing St. Margaret's churchyard, late one evening, I saw a glimmering light in the midst of it, which excited my curiosity. Just as I arrived at the spot, a grave-digger, who was at work by the light of his lanthorn, threw up a skull which struck me upon the leg. This little accident was an alarm to my conscience; for that event may be numbered among the best religious documents which I received at Westminster. The impression, however, presently went off, and I became so forgetful of mortality, that, strange as it may seem, surveying my activity and strength, and observing the evenness of my pulse, I began to entertain, with no small complacency, a notion that perhaps I might never die! This notion was, however, very short-lived; *for I was soon after struck with a lowness of spirits*, uncommon at my age, and frequently had intimations of a consumptive habit. I had skill enough to understand their meaning, but could never prevail on myself to disclose them to any one; for I thought any bodily infirmity a disgrace, especially a consumption. This messenger from the Lord, however, did his errand, and perfectly convinced me that I was mortal.

That I may do justice to the place of my education, I must relate one mark of religious discipline, which, in my time, was observed at Westminster; I mean, the pains which Dr. Nicholls took to prepare us for confirmation. The old man acquitted himself of his duty like one who had a deep sense of its importance; and I believe most of us were struck by his manner, and affected by his exhortation. For my own part, I then, for the first time, attempted prayer in secret; but being little accustomed to that exercise of the heart, and having very childish notions of religion, I found it a difficult and painful task; and was even then frightened at my own insensibility. This difficulty, though it did not subdue my good purposes, till the ceremony of confirmation was past, soon after entirely conquered them; I relapsed into a total forgetfulness of God, with the usual disadvantage of being more hardened, for having been softened to no purpose.

At twelve or thirteen I was seized with the small-pox. I only mention this to show that, at that early age, my heart was become proof against the ordinary means which a gracious God employs for our chastisement. Though I was severely handled by the disease, and in imminent danger, yet neither in the course of it, nor during my recovery, had I any sentiment of contrition, any thought of God or eternity. On the contrary, I was scarcely raised from the bed of pain and sickness, before the emotions of sin became more violent in me than ever; and Satan seemed rather to have gained than lost an advantage; so readily did I admit his suggestions, and so passive was I under them.

* We deeply lament that boys frequently leave public schools most discreditably deficient even in the common principles of the Christian faith. My late lamented friend, the Rev. Legh Richmond, used to observe that Christ was crucified between classics and mathematics. A great improvement might be effected in the system of modern education, if a brief but compendious summary of divine truth, or analysis of the Bible, were drawn up, divided into parts, suited to the different gradations of age and knowledge, and introduced into our public schools under the sanction of the Episcopal Bench. Care should also be taken, in the selection of under-masters, to appoint men of *acknowledged religious as well as classical attainments*, who might specially superintend the religious improvement of the boys. Such are to be found in our Universities, men not less eminent for divine than profane knowledge. A visible reformation would thus be effected, powerfully operating on the moral and spiritual character of the rising generation.

By this time I became such an adept in falsehood that I was seldom guilty of a fault for which I could not, at a very short notice, invent an apology, capable of deceiving the wisest. These I know are called school-boys' tricks; but a sad depravity of principle, and the work of the father of lies, are universally at the bottom of them.

At the age of eighteen, being tolerably furnished with a grammatical knowledge, but as ignorant in all points of religion as the satchel at my back, I was taken from Westminster; and, having spent about nine months at home, was sent to acquire the practice of the law with an attorney. There I might have lived and died without hearing or seeing anything that might remind me of a single Christian duty, had it not been that I was at liberty to spend my leisure time (which was well nigh all my time) at my uncle's,* in Southampton Row. By this means I had indeed an opportunity of seeing the inside of a church, whither I went with the family on Sundays, which probably I should otherwise never have seen.

At the expiration of this term, I became, in a manner, complete master of myself; and took possession of a complete set of chambers in the Temple, at the age of twenty-one. This being a critical season of my life, and one upon which much depended, it pleased my all-merciful Father in Jesus Christ to give a check to my rash and ruinous career of wickedness at the very onset. *I was struck, not long after my settlement in the Temple, with such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair.*† I presently lost all relish for those studies to which I had before been closely attached; the classics had no longer any charms for me; I had need of something more salutary than amusement, but I had no one to direct me where to find it.

At length I met with Herbert's Poems; and gothic and uncouth as they were, I yet found in them a strain of piety which I could not but admire. This was the only author I had any delight in reading. I pored over him all day long; and though I found not here, what I might have found, a cure for my malady, yet it never seemed so much alleviated as while I was reading him. At length I was advised by a very near and dear relative, to lay him aside; for he thought such an author more likely to nourish my disorder than to remove it.‡

In this state of mind I continued near a twelvemonth; when, having experienced the inefficacy of all human means, I at length betook myself to God in prayer; such is the rank which our Redeemer holds in our esteem, never resorted to but in the last instance, when all creatures have failed to succor us. My hard heart was at length softened; and my stubborn knees brought to bow. I composed a set of prayers, and made frequent use of them. Weak as my faith was, the Almighty, who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, was graciously pleased to hear me.

A change of scene was recommended to me; and I embraced an opportunity of going with some friends to Southampton, where I spent several months. Soon after our arrival, we walked to a place called Freemantle, about a mile from the town: the morning was clear and calm; the sun shone bright upon the sea; and the country on the borders of it was the most beautiful I had ever seen. We sat down upon an eminence, at the end of the arm of the sea, which runs between Southampton and the New Forest. Here it was, that, on a sudden, as if another sun had been kindled that instant in the heavens, on purpose to dispel sorrow and vexation of spirit, I felt the weight of all my misery taken off; my heart became light and joyful in a moment; I could have wept with transport had I been alone. I must needs believe that nothing less than the Almighty fiat could have filled me with such inexpressible delight; not by a gradual dawning of peace, but as it were with a flash of his life-giving countenance. I think I remember something like a glow of gratitude to the Father of mercies for this unexpected blessing, and that I ascribed it to his gracious acceptance of my prayers. But Satan, and my own wicked heart, quickly persuaded me that I was indebted for my deliverance to nothing but a change of scene and the amusing varieties of the place. By this means he turned the blessing into a poison; teaching me to conclude, that nothing but a continued circle of diversion, and indulgence of appetite, could secure me from a relapse.*

* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

† Here we first observe the ground-work of Cowper's malady, originating in constitutional causes, and morbid temperament.

‡ A relative of Cowper's ought to have been the last to prohibit the perusal of Herbert's Poems, because Dr. John Donne, the pious and eminent Dean of St. Paul's, one of Cowper's ancestors, was the endeared friend of that holy man, to whom, not long before his death, he sent a seal, representing a figure of Christ extended upon an anchor, the emblem of Hope, to be kept as a memorial.

Izaak Walton bears the following expressive testimony to Herbert's Temple, or Sacred Poems.

"A book, in which by declaring his own spiritual conflicts, he hath comforted and raised many a dejected and discomposed soul, and charmed them into sweet and quiet thoughts; a book, by the frequent reading whereof, and the assistance of that Spirit that seemed to inspire the author, the reader may attain habits of *peace* and *piety*, and all the gifts of the *Holy Ghost* and *Heaven*; and may, by still reading, still keep those sacred fires burning upon the altar of so pure a heart, as shall free it from the anxieties of this world, and keep it fixed upon things that are above." See *Walton's Lives*.

* We do not know a state of mind more to be depre-

Upon this false principle, as soon as I returned to London, I burnt my prayers, and away went all thoughts of devotion and dependence upon God my Saviour. Surely it was of his mercy that I was not consumed; glory be to his grace! Two deliverances from danger not making any impression, having spent about twelve years in the Temple, in an uninterrupted course of sinful indulgence, and my associates and companions being either, like myself, professed Christians, or professed infidels, I obtained, at length, so complete a victory over my conscience, that all remonstrances from that quarter were in vain, and in a manner silenced; though sometimes, indeed, a question would arise in my mind, whether it were safe to proceed any farther in a course so plainly and utterly condemned in the word of God. I saw clearly that if the gospel were true, such a conduct must inevitably end in my destruction; but I saw not by what means I could change my Ethiopian complexion, or overcome such an inveterate habit of rebelling against God.

The next thing that occurred to me was a doubt whether the gospel were true or false. To this succeeded many an anxious wish for the decision of this important question; for I foolishly thought, that obedience would presently follow, were I but convinced that it was worth while to attempt it. Having no reason to expect a miracle, and not hoping to be satisfied with anything less, I acquiesced, at length, in the force of that devilish conclusion, that the only course I could take to secure my present peace was to wink hard against the prospect of future misery, and to resolve to banish all thoughts of a subject, upon which I thought to so little purpose. Nevertheless, when I was in the company of deists, and heard the gospel blasphemed, I never failed to assert the truth of it with much vehemence of disputation; for which I was the better qualified, having been always an industrious and diligent inquirer into the evidences by which it was externally supported. I think I once went so far into a controversy of this kind, as to assert, that I would gladly submit to have my right hand cut off, so that I might but be enabled to live according to the gospel. Thus have I been employed, when half intoxicated, in vindicating the truth of scripture, while in the very act of rebellion against its dictates. Lamentable inconsistency of a convinced judgment with an unsanctified heart! An inconsistency, indeed, evident to others as well as to myself, inasmuch as a deistical friend of mine, with whom I was disputing upon the subject, cut short the matter, by alleging that, if what I said were true, I was certainly lost by my own showing.

By this time, my patrimony being well nigh spent, and there being no appearance that I should ever repair the damage by a fortune of my own getting, I began to be a little apprehensive of approaching want. It was, I imagine, under some apprehensions of this kind, that I one day said to a friend of mine, if the clerk to the journals of the House of Lords should die, I had some hopes that my kinsman, who had the place in his disposal, would appoint me to succeed him. We both agreed that the business of that place, being transacted in private, would exactly suit me. Thus did I covet what God had commanded me not to covet. It pleased the Lord to give me my heart's desire, and with it an immediate punishment for my crime. The man died, and, by his death, not only the clerkship of the journals became vacant, but it became necessary to appoint officers to two other places, jointly, as deputies to Mr. De Grey,* who at this time resigned. These were the office of reading clerk, and the clerkship of the committees, of much greater value than that of the journals. The patentee of these appointments (whom I pray to God to bless for his benevolent intention to serve me) called on me at my chambers, and, having invited me to take a turn with him in the garden, there made me an offer of the two most profitable places; intending the other for his friend Mr. A. Dazzled by so splendid a proposal, and not immediately reflecting upon my incapacity to execute a business of so public a nature, I at once accepted it; but at the same time (such was the will of Him whose hand was in the whole matter) seemed to receive a dagger in my heart. *The wound was given, and every moment added to the smart of it.* All the considerations, by which I endeavored to compose my mind to its former tranquillity, did but torment me the more; proving miserable comforters and counsellors of no value. I returned to my chambers thoughtful and unhappy; my countenance fell; and my friend was astonished, instead of that additional cheerfulness he might so reasonably expect, to find an air of deep melancholy in all I said or did.

Having been harassed in this manner by day and night, for the space of a week, perplexed

cated than what is indicated in this passage. It is the science of self-tormenting, that withers every joy, and blights all our happiness. That Satan tempts is a scriptural truth; but the same divine authority also informs us, that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed," James i. 14; that God suffereth no man to be tempted above what he is able, and that if we resist Satan he will flee from us. The mind that feels itself harassed by these mental temptations must take refuge in the promises of God, such as Isaiah xli. 10; xliii. 2; lix. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 9. and plead them in prayer. Resistance to temptation will weaken it, faith will overcome it, and the panoply of Heaven, if we be careful to gird ourselves with it, will secure us against all its inroads.

* Afterwards Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and created Lord Walsingham.

between the apparent folly of casting away the only visible chance I had of being well provided for and the impossibility of retaining it, I determined at length to write a letter to my friend, though he lodged in a manner at the next door, and we generally spent the day together. I did so, and therein begged him to accept my resignation, and to appoint Mr. A. to the places he had given me; and permit me to succeed Mr. A. I was well aware of the disproportion between the value of his appointment and mine; but my peace was gone; pecuniary advantages were not equivalent to what I had lost; and I flattered myself, that the clerkship of the journals would fall fairly and easily within the scope of my abilities. Like a man in a fever, I thought a change of posture would relieve my pain; and, as the event will show, was equally disappointed. At length I carried my point; my friend, in this instance, preferring the gratification of my desires to his own interest; for nothing could be so likely to bring a suspicion of bargain and sale upon his nomination, which the Lords would not have endured, as his appointment of so near a relative to the least profitable office, while the most valuable was allotted to a stranger.

The matter being thus settled, something like a calm took place in my mind. I was, indeed, not a little concerned about my character; being aware, that it must needs suffer by the strange appearance of my proceeding. This, however, being but a small part of the anxiety I had labored under, was hardly felt, when the rest was taken off. I thought my path to an easy maintenance was now plain and open, and for a day or two was tolerably cheerful. But, behold, the storm was gathering all the while; and the fury of it was not the less violent for this gleam of sunshine.

In the beginning, a strong opposition to my friend's right of nomination began to show itself. A powerful party was formed among the lords to thwart it, in favor of an old enemy of the family, though one much indebted to its bounty; and it appeared plain that, if we succeeded at last, it would only be by fighting our ground by inches. Every advantage, I was told, would be sought for, and eagerly seized, to disconcert us. I was bid to expect an examination at the bar of the house, touching my sufficiency for the post I had taken. Being necessarily ignorant of the nature of that business, it became expedient that I should visit the office daily, in order to qualify myself for the strictest scrutiny. All the horror of my fears and perplexities now returned. A thunderbolt would have been as welcome to me as this intelligence. I knew, to demonstration, that upon these terms the clerkship of the journals was no place for me. To require my attendance at the bar of the house, that I might there publicly entitle myself to the office, was, in effect, to exclude me from it. In the meantime, the interest of my friend, the honor of his choice, my own reputation and circumstances, all urged me forward; all pressed me to undertake that which I saw to be impracticable. They whose spirits are formed like mine, to whom *a public exhibition of themselves, on any occasion, is mortal poison*, may have some idea of the horrors of my situation; others can have none.

My continual misery at length brought on a nervous fever: quiet forsook me by day, and peace by night; a finger raised against me was more than I could stand against. In this posture of mind, I attended regularly at the office; where, instead of a soul upon the rack, the most active spirits were essentially necessary for my purpose. I expected no assistance from anybody there, all the inferior clerks being under the influence of my opponent; and accordingly I received none. The journal books were indeed thrown open to me, a thing which could not be refused; and from which, perhaps, a man in health, and with a head turned to business, might have gained all the information he wanted; but it was not so with me. I read without perception, and was so distressed, that had every clerk in the office been my friend, it could have availed me little; for I was not in a condition to receive instruction, much less to elicit it out of manuscripts, without direction. Many months went over me thus employed; constant in the use of means, despairing as to the issue.

The feelings of a man when he arrives at the place of execution, are probably much like mine every time I set my foot in the office, which was every day for more than half a year together.

At length, the vacation being pretty far advanced, I made a shift to get into the country, and repaired to Margate. There, by the help of cheerful company, a new scene, and the intermission of my painful employment, I presently began to recover my spirits; though even here, for some time after my arrival (notwithstanding, perhaps, that the preceding day had been spent agreeably, and without any disturbing recollection of my circumstances), my first reflections, when I awoke in the morning, were horrible and full of wretchedness. I looked forward to the approaching winter, and regretted the flight of every moment which brought it nearer; like a man borne away by a rapid torrent into a stormy sea, whence he sees no possibility of returning, and where he knows he cannot subsist. At length, indeed, I acquired such a facility of turning away my thoughts from the ensuing crisis, that for weeks together, I

hardly adverted to it at all; but the stress of the tempest was yet to come, and was not to be avoided by any resolution of mine to look another way.

"How wonderful are the works of the Lord, and his ways past finding out!" Thus was he preparing me for an event which I least of all expected, even the reception of his blessed gospel, working by means which, in all human contemplation, must needs seem directly opposite to that purpose, but which, in his wise and gracious disposal, have, I trust, effectually accomplished it.

About the beginning of October, 1763, I was again required to attend the office and prepare for the push. This no sooner took place, than all my misery returned; again I visited the scene of ineffectual labors; again I felt myself pressed by necessity on either side, with nothing but despair in prospect. To this dilemma was I reduced, either to keep possession of the office to the last extremity, and by so doing expose myself to a public rejection for insufficiency (for the little knowledge I had acquired would have quite forsaken me at the bar of the house); or else to fling it up at once, and by this means run the hazard of ruining my benefactor's right of appointment, by bringing his discretion into question. In this situation, such a fit of passion has sometimes seized me, when alone in my chambers, that I have cried out aloud, and cursed the hour of my birth; lifting up my eyes to heaven, at the same time, not as a supplicant, but in the spirit of reproach against my Maker. A thought would sometimes come across my mind, that my sins had perhaps brought this distress upon me, that the hand of divine vengeance was in it; but in the pride of my heart, I presently acquitted myself, and thereby implicitly charged God with injustice, saying, "What sins have I committed to deserve this?"

I saw plainly that God alone could deliver me; but was firmly persuaded that he would not, and therefore omitted to ask it. Indeed, at *his* hands, I would not; but as Saul sought to the witch, so did I to the physician, Dr. Heberden; and was as diligent in the use of drugs, as if they would have healed my wounded spirit, or have made the rough places plain before me. I made, indeed, one effort of a devotional kind; for, having found a prayer or two, I said them a few nights, but with so little expectation of prevailing that way, that I soon laid aside the book, and with it all thoughts of God and hopes of a remedy.

I now began to look upon madness as the only chance remaining. I had a strong kind of foreboding that so it would one day fare with me; and I wished for it earnestly, and looked forward to it with impatient expectation. My chief fear was, that my senses would not fail me time enough to excuse my appearance at the bar of the House of Lords, which was the only purpose I wanted it to answer. Accordingly, the day of decision drew near, and I was still in my senses; though in my heart I had formed many wishes, and by word of mouth expressed many expectations to the contrary.

Now came the grand temptation; the point to which Satan had all the while been driving me. I grew more sullen and reserved, fled from society, even from my most intimate friends, and shut myself up in my chambers. The ruin of my fortune, the contempt of my relations and acquaintance, the prejudice I should do to my patron, were all urged on me with irresistible energy. Being reconciled to the apprehension of madness, I began to be reconciled to the apprehension of death. Though formerly, in my happiest hours, I had never been able to glance a single thought that way, without shuddering at the idea of dissolution, I now wished for it, and found myself but little shocked at the idea of procuring it myself. I considered life as my property, and therefore at my own disposal. Men of great name, I observed, had destroyed themselves; and the world still retained the profoundest respect for their memories.

[An imperative sense of duty compels me to throw a veil over the afflicting details which follow. Respect for the known wishes of my departed brother-in-law, a desire not to wound the feelings of living characters, and a consciousness that such disclosures are not suited to meet the public eye, confirm me in this resolution. It may be said, that the facts are accessible, and may be known; why make a mystery of communicating them? My answer is, I am a father; I will not inflict a shock on the youthful minds of my own children, neither will I be instrumental in conveying it to those of others. I will make such use of the Memoir as may answer the purpose I have in view, but I will not be the medium of revealing the secrets of the prison-house. It is sufficient to state that Cowper meditated the crime of self-destruction, and that he was arrested in his purpose by an Almighty arm. To quote his own emphatic words, "Unless my Eternal Father in Christ Jesus had interposed to disannul my covenant with death, and my agreement with hell, that I might hereafter be admitted into the covenant of mercy, I had by this time been the just object of his boundless vengeance."

All expectations of being able to hold the office in parliament being now at an end, he despatched a friend to his relative at the coffee-house.]

As soon, he observes, as the latter arrived,

I apprised him of the attempt I had been making. His words were, "My dear Mr. Cowper, you terrify me: to be sure you cannot hold the office at this rate. Where is the deputation?" I gave him the key of the drawers where it was deposited; and, his business requiring his immediate attendance, he took it away with him; and thus ended all my connexion with the parliament house.

To this moment I had felt no concern of a spiritual kind. Ignorant of original sin, insensible of the guilt of actual transgression, I understood neither the law nor the Gospel; the condemning nature of the one, nor the restoring mercies of the other. I was as much unacquainted with Christ, in all his saving offices, as if his blessed name had never reached me. Now, therefore, a new scene opened upon me. Conviction of sin took place, especially of that just committed; the meanness of it, as well as its atrocity, were exhibited to me in colors so inconceivably strong, that I despised myself, with a contempt not to be imagined or expressed, for having attempted it. This sense of it secured me from the repetition of a crime, which I could not now reflect on without abhorrence.

A sense of God's wrath, and a deep despair of escaping it, instantly succeeded. The fear of death became much more prevalent in me than ever the desire of it had been.

A frequent flashing, like that of fire, before my eyes, and an excessive pressure upon the brain, made me apprehensive of an apoplexy.

By the advice of my dear friend and benefactor, who called upon me again at noon, I sent for a physician, and told him the fact, and the stroke I apprehended. He assured me there was no danger of it, and advised me by all means to retire into the country. Being made easy in that particular, and not knowing where to better myself, I continued in my chambers, where the solitude of my situation left me at full liberty to attend to my spiritual state; a matter I had till this day never sufficiently thought of.

At this time I wrote to my brother, at Cambridge, to inform him of the distress I had been in, and the dreadful method I had taken to deliver myself from it; assuring him, as I faithfully might, that I had laid aside all such horrid intentions, and was desirous to live as long as it would please the Almighty to permit me.

My sins were now set in array against me, and I began to see and feel that I had lived without God in the world. As I walked to and fro in my chamber, I said within myself, "*There never was so abandoned a wretch, so great a sinner.*" All my worldly sorrows seemed as though they had never been; the terrors which succeeded them seemed so great and so much more afflicting. One moment I thought myself shut out from mercy by one chapter; the next by another. The sword of the Spirit seemed to guard the tree of life from my touch, and to flame against me in every avenue by which I attempted to approach it. I particularly remember, that the parable of the barren fig-tree was to me an inconceivable source of anguish; and I applied it to myself with a strong persuasion in my mind that, when the Saviour pronounced a curse upon it, he had me in his eye, and pointed that curse directly at me.

I turned over all Archbishop Tillotson's sermons, in hopes of finding one upon the subject, and consulted my brother upon the true meaning of it; desirous, if possible, to obtain a different interpretation of the matter than my evil conscience would suffer me to fasten on it. "O Lord, thou didst vex me with all thy storms, all thy billows went over me; thou didst run upon me like a giant in the night season, thou didst scare me with visions in the night season."

In every book I opened, I found something that struck me to the heart. I remember taking up a volume of Beaumont and Fletcher, which lay upon the table in my kinsman's lodgings, and the first sentence which I saw was this: "The justice of the gods is in it." My heart instantly replied, "It is a truth;" and I cannot but observe, that as I found something in every author to condemn me, so it was the first sentence, in general, I pitched upon. Everything preached to me, and everything preached the curse of the law.

I was now strongly tempted to use laudanum, not as a poison, but as an opiate, to compose my spirits; to stupefy my awakened and feeling mind, harassed with sleepless nights and days of uninterrupted misery. But God forbad it, who would have nothing to interfere with the quickening work he had begun in me; and neither the want of rest, nor continued agony of mind, could bring me to the use of it: I hated and abhorred the very smell of it.

Having an obscure notion about the efficacy of faith, I resolved upon an experiment to prove whether I had faith or not. For this purpose, I resolved to repeat the Creed: when I came to the second period of it, all traces of the former were struck out of my memory, nor could I recollect one syllable of the matter. While I endeavored to recover it, and when just upon the point, I perceived a sensation in my brain, like a tremulous vibration in all the fibres of it. By this means I lost the words in the very instant when I thought to have laid hold of them. This threw me into an agony; but growing a little calmer, I made an attempt for the third time; here again I failed in the same manner as before.

In this condition my brother found me, and the first words I spoke to him were, "Oh! brother, I am lost! think of eternity, and then think what it is to be lost!" I had, indeed, a sense of eternity impressed upon my mind, which seemed almost to amount to a full comprehension of it.

My brother, pierced to the heart with the sight of my misery, tried to comfort me, but all to no purpose. I refused comfort, and my mind appeared to me in such colors, that to administer it to me was only to exasperate me, and to mock my fears.

At length, I remembered my friend Martin Madan, and sent for him. I used to think him an enthusiast, but now seemed convinced that, if there was any balm in Gilead, he must administer it to me. On former occasions, when my spiritual concerns had at any time occurred to me, I thought likewise on the necessity of repentance. I knew that many persons had spoken of shedding tears for sin; but when I asked myself, whether the time would ever come when I should weep for mine, it seemed to me that a stone might sooner do it.

Not knowing that Christ was exalted to give repentance, I despaired of ever attaining to it. My friend came to me; we sat on the bed-side together, and he began to declare to me the gospel. He spoke of original sin, and the corruption of every man born into the world, whereby every one is a child of wrath. I perceived something like hope dawning in my heart. This doctrine set me more on a level with the rest of mankind, and made my condition appear less desperate.

Next he insisted on the all-atoning efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and his righteousness, for our justification. While I heard this part of his discourse, and the scriptures on which he founded it, my heart began to burn within me, my soul was pierced with a sense of my bitter ingratitude to so merciful a Saviour; and those tears, which I thought impossible, burst forth freely. I saw clearly that my case required such a remedy, and had not the least doubt within me but that this was the gospel of salvation.

Lastly, he urged the necessity of a lively faith in Jesus Christ; not an assent only of the understanding, but a faith of application, an actual laying hold of it, and embracing it as a salvation wrought out for me personally. Here I failed, and deplored my want of such a faith. He told me it was the gift of God, which he trusted he would bestow upon me. I could only reply, "I wish he would:" a very irreverent petition;* but a very sincere one, and such as the blessed God, in his due time, was pleased to answer.

My brother, finding that I had received consolation from Mr. Madan, was very anxious that I should take the earliest opportunity of conversing with him again; and, for this purpose, pressed me to go to him immediately. I was for putting it off, but my brother seemed impatient of delay; and, at length, prevailed on me to set out. I mention this, to the honor of his candor and humanity; which would suffer no difference of sentiments to interfere with them. My welfare was his only object, and all prejudices fled before his zeal to procure it. May he receive, for his recompense, all that happiness the gospel, which I then first became acquainted with, is alone able to impart!

Easier, indeed, I was, but far from easy. The wounded spirit within me was less in pain, but by no means healed. What I had experienced was but the beginning of sorrows, and a long train of still greater terrors was at hand. I slept my three hours well, and then awoke with ten times a stronger alienation from God than ever.

At eleven o'clock my brother called upon me, and, in about an hour after his arrival, that distemper of mind, which I had so ardently wished for, actually seized me.

While I traversed the apartment, expecting every moment the earth would open her mouth and swallow me, my conscience scaring me, and the city of refuge out of reach and out of sight, a strange and horrible darkness fell upon me. If it were possible that a heavy blow could light on the brain, without touching the skull, such was the sensation I felt. I clapped my hand to my forehead, and cried aloud through the pain it gave me. At every stroke my thoughts and expressions became more wild and incoherent; all that remained clear was the sense of sin, and the expectation of punishment. These kept undisturbed possession all through my illness, without interruption or abatement.

My brother instantly observed the change, and consulted with my friends on the best mode to dispose of me. It was agreed among them, that I should be carried to St. Alban's, where Dr. Cotton kept a house for the reception of such patients, and with whom I was known to have a slight acquaintance. Not only his skill as a physician recommended him to their choice, but his well-known humanity and sweetness of temper. It will be proper to draw a veil over the secrets of my prison-house: let it suffice to say, that the low state of body and mind to which I was reduced was perfectly well calculated to humble the natural vainglory and pride of my heart.

These are the efficacious means which Infinite Wisdom thought meet to make use of for that purpose. A sense of self-loathing and abhorrence ran through all my insanity. Conviction of sin, and expectation of instant

* It could hardly be called irreverent, unless the manner in which it was uttered rendered it such.

judgment, never left me, from the 7th of December 1763, until the middle of July following. The accuser of the brethren was ever busy with me night and day, bringing to my recollection in dreams the commission of long-forgotten sins, and charging upon my conscience things of an indifferent nature as atrocious crimes.

All that passed in this long interval of eight months may be classed under two heads, conviction of sin, and despair of mercy. But blessed be the God of my salvation for every sigh I drew, for every tear I shed; since thus it pleased him to judge me here, that I might not be judged hereafter.

After five months of continual expectation that the divine vengeance would overtake me, I became so familiar with despair as to have contracted a sort of hardiness and indifference as to the event. I began to persuade myself that, while the execution of the sentence was suspended, it would be for my interest to indulge a less horrible train of ideas than I had been accustomed to muse upon. By the means I entered into conversation with the doctor, laughed at his stories, and told him some of my own to match them; still, however, carrying a sentence of irrevocable doom in my heart.

He observed the seeming alteration with pleasure. Believing, as well he might, that my smiles were sincere, he thought my recovery well-nigh completed; but they were, in reality, like the green surface of a morass, pleasant to the eye, but a cover for nothing but rottenness and filth. *The only thing that could promote and effectuate my cure was yet wanting; an experimental knowledge of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.*

In about three months more (July 25, 1764) my brother came from Cambridge to visit me. Dr. C. having told him that he thought me greatly amended, he was rather disappointed at finding me almost as silent and reserved as ever; for the first sight of him struck me with many painful sensations both of sorrow for my own remediless condition and envy of his happiness.

As soon as we were left alone, he asked me how I found myself; I answered, "As much better as despair can make me." We went together into the garden. Here, on expressing a settled assurance of sudden judgment, he protested to me that it was all a delusion; and protested so strongly, that I could not help giving some attention to him. I burst into tears, and cried out, "If it be a delusion, then am I the happiest of beings." Something like a ray of hope was shot into my heart; but still I was afraid to indulge it. We dined together, and I spent the afternoon in a more cheerful manner. Something seemed to whisper to me every moment, "Still there is mercy."

Even after he left me, this change of sentiment gathered ground continually; yet my mind was in such a fluctuating state, that I can only call it a vague presage of better things at hand, without being able to assign a reason for it. The servant observed a sudden alteration in me for the better; and the man, whom I have ever since retained in my service,* expressed great joy on the occasion.

I went to bed and slept well. In the morning, I dreamed that the sweetest boy I ever saw came dancing up to my bedside; he seemed just out of leading-strings, yet I took particular notice of the firmness and steadiness of his tread. The sight affected me with pleasure, and served at least to harmonize my spirits; so that I awoke for the first time with a sensation of delight on my mind. Still, however, I knew not where to look for the establishment of the comfort I felt; my joy was as much a mystery to myself as to those about me. The blessed God was preparing for me the clearer light of his countenance, by this first dawning of that light upon me.

Within a few days of my first arrival at St. Alban's, I had thrown aside the word of God, as a book in which I had no longer any interest or portion. The only instance, in which I can recollect reading a single chapter, was about two months before my recovery. Having found a Bible on the bench in the garden, I opened upon the 11th of St. John, where Lazarus is raised from the dead; and saw so much benevolence, mercy, goodness, and sympathy with miserable man, in our Saviour's conduct, that I almost shed tears even after the relation; little thinking that it was an exact type of the mercy which Jesus was on the point of extending towards myself. I sighed, and said, "Oh, that I had not rejected so good a Redeemer, that I had not forfeited all his favors!" Thus was my heart softened, though not yet enlightened. I closed the book, without intending to open it again.

Having risen with somewhat of a more cheerful feeling, I repaired to my room, where breakfast waited for me. While I sat at table, I found the cloud of horror, which had so long hung over me, was every moment passing away; and every moment came fraught with hope. I was continually more and more persuaded that I was not utterly doomed to destruction. The way of salvation was still, however, hid from my eyes; nor did I see it at all clearer than before my illness. I only thought that if it would please God to spare me, I would lead a better life; and that I would yet escape hell, if a religious observance of my duty would secure me from it.

* Samuel Roberts.

Thus may the terror of the Lord make a pharisee; but only the sweet voice of mercy in the gospel can make a Christian.

[We are now arrived at the eventful crisis of Cowper's conversion and restoration, which is thus recorded in his own words.]

But the happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the 3rd of Romans; "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

Immediately I received strength to believe it, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon sealed in his blood, and all the fulness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed, and received the gospel. Whatever my friend Madan had said to me, long before, revived in all its clearness, with demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have died with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport, I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Holy Ghost is best described in his own words, it is "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Thus was my heavenly Father in Christ Jesus pleased to give me the full assurance of faith, and out of a strong, stony, unbelieving heart to raise up a child unto Abraham. How glad should I now have been to have spent every moment in prayer and thanksgiving!

I lost no opportunity of repairing to a throne of grace; but flew to it with an earnestness irresistible, and never to be satisfied. Could I help it? Could I do otherwise than love and rejoice in my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus? The Lord had enlarged my heart, and I ran in the way of his commandments. For many succeeding weeks tears were ready to flow, if I did but speak of the gospel, or mention the name of Jesus. To rejoice day and night was all my employment. Too happy to sleep much, I thought it was but lost time that was spent in slumber. O that the ardor of my first love had continued! But I have known many a lifeless and unhallowed hour since; long intervals of darkness, interrupted by short returns of peace and joy in believing.

My physician, ever watchful and apprehensive for my welfare, was now alarmed lest the sudden transition from despair to joy should terminate in a fatal frenzy. But "the Lord was my strength and my song, and was become my salvation." I said, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord; he has chastened me sore, but not given me over unto death. O give thanks unto the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever."

In a short time, Dr. C. became satisfied, and acquiesced in the soundness of my cure: and much sweet communion I had with him, concerning the things of our salvation. He visited me every morning while I stayed with him, which was near twelve months after my recovery, and the gospel was the delightful theme of our conversation.

No trial has befallen me since, but what might be expected in a state of warfare. Satan, indeed, has changed his battery. Before my conversion, sensual gratification was the weapon with which he sought to destroy me. Being naturally of an easy, quiet disposition, I was seldom tempted to anger; yet that passion it is which now gives me the most disturbance, and occasions the sharpest conflicts. But Jesus being my strength, I fight against it; and if I am not conqueror, yet I am not overcome.

I now employed my brother to seek out an abode for me in the neighborhood of Cambridge, being determined by the Lord's leave, to see London, the scene of my former abominations, no more. I had still one place of preferment left, which seemed to bind me under the necessity of returning thither again. But I resolved to break the bond, chiefly because my peace of conscience was in question. I held, for some years, the office of commissioner of bankrupts with about 60*l.* per annum. Conscious of my ignorance of the law, I could not take the accustomed oath, and resigned it; thereby releasing myself from an occasion of great sin, and every obligation to return to London. By this means, I reduced myself to an income scarcely sufficient for my maintenance; but I would rather have starved in reality than deliberately offend against my Saviour; and his great mercy has since raised me up such friends, as have enabled me to enjoy all the comforts and conveniences of life. I am well assured that, while I live, "bread shall be given me, and water shall be sure," according to his gracious promise.

After my brother had made many unsuccessful attempts to procure me a dwelling near him, I one day poured out my soul in prayer to God, beseeching him that, wherever he should be pleased, in his fatherly mercy, to lead me, it might be in the society of those who feared his name, and loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; a prayer of which I have good reason to acknowledge his gracious acceptance.

In the beginning of June, 1765, I received a letter from my brother, to say he had taken lodgings for me at Huntingdon, which he believed would suit me. Though it was sixteen miles from Cambridge, I was resolved to take them; for I had been two months in perfect health, and my circumstances required a less expensive way of life. It was with great reluctance, however, that I thought of leaving the place of my second nativity; I had so much leisure there to study the blessed word of God, and had enjoyed so much happiness; but God ordered everything for me like an indulgent Father, and had prepared a more comfortable place of residence than I could have chosen for myself.

On the 7th of June, 1765, having spent more than eighteen months at St. Alban's, partly in bondage, and partly in the liberty wherewith Christ had made me free, I took my leave of the place at four in the morning, and set out for Cambridge.

The servant, whom I lately mentioned as rejoicing in my recovery, attended me. He had maintained such an affectionate watchfulness over me during my whole illness, and waited on me with so much patience and gentleness, that I could not bear to leave him behind, though it was with some difficulty the Doctor was prevailed on to part with him. The strongest argument of all was the earnest desire he expressed to follow me. He seemed to have been providentially thrown in my way, having entered Dr. C.'s service just time enough to attend me: and I have strong ground to hope, that God will use me as an instrument to bring him to a knowledge of Jesus. It is impossible to say with how delightful a sense of his protection and fatherly care of me, it has pleased the Almighty to favor me, during the whole journey.

I remembered the pollution which is in the world, and the sad share I had in it myself; and my heart ached at the thought of entering it again. The blessed God had endued me with some concern for his glory, and I was fearful of hearing it tradueed by oaths and blasphemies, the common language of this highly favored, but ungrateful country.* But "fear not, I am with thee," was my comfort. I passed the whole journey in silent communion with God; and those hours are amongst the happiest I have known.

I repaired to Huntingdon the Saturday after my arrival at Cambridge. My brother, who had attended me thither, had no sooner left me than, finding myself surrounded by strangers and in a strange place, my spirits began to sink, and I felt (such were the backslidings of my heart) like a traveller in the midst of an inhospitable desert, without a friend to comfort or a guide to direct me. I walked forth, towards the close of the day, in this melancholy frame of mind, and, having wandered about a mile from the town, I found my heart, at length, so powerfully drawn towards the Lord, that, having gained a retired and secret nook in the corner of a field, I kneeled down under a bank, and poured forth my complaints before him. It pleased my Saviour to hear me, in that this oppression was taken off, and I was enabled to trust in him that careth for the stranger, to roll my burden upon him, and to rest assured that, wheresoever he might cast my lot, the God of all consolation would still be with me. But this was not all. He did for me more than either I had asked or thought.

The next day, I went to church for the first time after my recovery. Throughout the whole service, I had much to do to restrain my emotions, so fully did I see the beauty and the glory of the Lord. My heart was full of love to all the congregation, especially to them in whom I observed an air of sober attention. A grave and sober person sat in the pew with me; him I have since seen and often conversed with, and have found him a pious man, and a true servant of the blessed Redeemer. While he was singing the psalm, I looked at him, and, observing him intent on his holy employment, I could not help saying in my heart, with much emotion, "Bless you, for praising Him whom my soul loveth!"

Such was the goodness of the Lord to me, that he gave me "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" and though my voice was silent, being stopped by the intenseness of what I felt, yet my soul sung within me, and even leaped for joy. And when the gospel for the day was read, the sound of it was more than I could well support. Oh, what a word is the word of God, when the Spirit quickens us to receive it, and gives the hearing ear, and the understanding heart! The harmony of heaven is in it, and discovers its author. The parable of the prodigal son was the portion. I saw myself in that glass so clearly, and the loving-kindness of my slighted and forgotten Lord, that the whole scene was realized to me, and acted over in my heart.

I went immediately after church to the place where I had prayed the day before, and found the relief I had there received was but the earnest of a richer blessing. How shall I express what the Lord did for me, except by saying, that he made all his goodness to pass before me! I seemed to speak to him face to face, as a man conversing with his friend, except that my speech was only in

* There is considerable improvement in public manners since this period, and oaths and blasphemies would not be tolerated in well-bred society. May the hallowed influence of the Gospel be instrumental in producing a still happier change!

tears of joy, and groanings which cannot be uttered. I could say, indeed, with Jacob, not "how dreadful," but how lovely, "is this place! This is none other than the house of God."

Four months I continued in my lodging. Some few of the neighbors came to see me, but their visits were not very frequent; and, in general, I had but little intercourse, except with my God in Christ Jesus. It was he who made my solitude sweet, and the wilderness to bloom and blossom as the rose; and my meditation of him was so delightful that, if I had few other comforts, neither did I want any.

One day, however, towards the expiration of this period, I found myself in a state of desertion. That communion which I had so long been able to maintain with the Lord was suddenly interrupted. I began to dislike my solitary situation, and to fear I should never be able to weather out the winter in so lonely a dwelling. Suddenly a thought struck me, which I shall not fear to call a suggestion of the good providence which had brought me to Huntingdon. A few months before, I had formed an acquaintance with the Rev. Mr. Unwin's family. His son, though he had heard that I rather declined society than sought it, and though Mrs. Unwin herself dissuaded him from visiting me on that account, was yet so strongly inclined to it, that, notwithstanding all objections and arguments to the contrary, he one day engaged himself, as we were coming out of church, after morning prayers, to drink tea with me that afternoon. To my inexpressible joy, I found him one whose notions of religion were spiritual and lively; one whom the Lord had been training up from his infancy for the service of the temple. We opened our hearts to each other at the first interview, and, when we parted, I immediately retired to my chamber, and prayed the Lord, who had been the author, to be the guardian of our friendship, and to grant to it fervency and perpetuity even unto death; and I doubt not that my gracious Father heard this prayer also.

The Sunday following I dined with him. That afternoon, while the rest of the family was withdrawn, I had much discourse with Mrs. Unwin. I am not at liberty to describe the pleasure I had in conversing with her, because she will be one of the first who will have the perusal of this narrative. Let it suffice to say, I found we had one faith, and had been baptized with the same baptism.

When I returned home, I gave thanks to God, who had so graciously answered my prayers, by bringing me into the society of Christians. She has since been a means in the hand of God of supporting, quickening, and strengthening me, in my walk with him. It was long before I thought of any other connexion with this family than as a friend and neighbor. On the day, however, above mentioned, while I was revolving in my mind the nature of my situation, and beginning, for the first time, to find an irksomeness in such retirement, suddenly it occurred to me that I might probably find a place in Mr. Unwin's family as a boarder. A young gentleman, who had lived with him as a pupil, was the day before gone to Cambridge. It appeared to me, at least, possible, that I might be allowed to succeed him. From the moment this thought struck me, such a tumult of anxious solicitude seized me, that for two or three days I could not divert my mind to any other subject. I blamed and condemned myself for want of submission to the Lord's will; but still the language of my mutinous and disobedient heart was, "Give me the blessing, or else I die."

About the third evening after I had determined upon the measure, I, at length, made shift to fasten my thoughts upon a theme which had no manner of connexion with it. While I was pursuing my meditations, Mr. Unwin and family quite out of sight, my attention was suddenly called home again by the words which had been continually playing in my mind, and were, at length, repeated with such importunity that I could not help regarding them:—"The Lord God of truth will do this." I was effectually convinced, that they were not of my own production, and accordingly I received from them some assurance of success; but my unbelief and fearfulness robbed me of much of the comfort they were intended to convey; though I have since had many a blessed experience of the same kind, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful. I immediately began to negotiate the affair, and in a few days it was entirely concluded.

I took possession of my new abode, Nov. 11, 1765. I have found it a place of rest prepared for me by God's own hand, where he has blessed me with a thousand mercies, and instances of his fatherly protection; and where he has given me abundant means of furtherance in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus, both by the study of his own word, and communion with his dear disciples. May nothing but death interrupt our union!

Peace be with the reader, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Painful as this memoir is in some of its earlier details, yet we know nothing more simple and beautiful in narrative, more touching and ingenuous in sentiment than its happy sequel and consummation. It resembles the storm that desolates the plain, but which is afterwards succeeded by the glowing beauties

of the renovated landscape. No document ever furnished an ampler refutation of the remark that ascribes his malady to the operation of religious causes. On the contrary, it appears that his first relief, under the tyranny of an unfeeling school-boy, was in the exercise of prayer, and that some of his happiest moments, in the enjoyment of the Divine presence, were experienced in the frame of mind which he describes, when at Southampton—that in proportion as he forgot the heavenly Monitor, his peace vanished, his passions resumed the ascendency, and he presented an unhappy compound of guilt and wretchedness. The history of his malady is developed in his own memoir with all the clearness of the most circumstantial evidence. A morbid temperament laid the foundation; an extreme susceptibility exposed him to continual nervous irritation; and early disappointments deepened the impression. At length, with a mind unoccupied by study, and undisciplined by self-command—contemplating a "public exhibition of himself as mortal poison," he sank under an offer which a more buoyant spirit would have grasped as an object of honorable ambition. In this state religion found him, and administered the happy cure.

That a morbid temperament was the originating cause of his depression, is confirmed by an affecting passage in one of his poems.

In the beautiful and much admired lines on his mother's picture, there is the following pathetic remark:

> My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
> Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
> Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
> *Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?*

In dwelling on these predisposing causes, the Editor thinks it right to state, in the most unequivocal manner, that there is not the remotest reason for supposing that any hereditary malady existed in the family of Cowper sufficient to account for this afflicting dispensation. There was an inflammatory action of his blood, and peculiar irritability of the nervous system, which a wise and salutary self-control and the early influence of religious principles might have subdued, or at least modified. Employment, also, or the active exercise of the faculties, seems indispensable to health and happiness.* He who lives without an allotted occupation is seldom either wise, virtuous, or happy. The mind recoils upon itself, and is consumed by its own fires. Providence, after the Fall, in mercy, not less than in justice, decreed that man should live by the sweat of his brow; that, in the same moment that he was reminded of his punishment, he might find the toil itself a powerful alleviation to his sufferings, and the exercise of all his faculties the road to competency, to usefulness, and honor.

Two events contributed to exercise a most injurious influence on the morbid mind of Cowper, not recorded in his own Memoir. We allude to the death of his friend, Sir William Russel, and his hopeless attachment to Miss Theodora Cowper.

Sir William was the contemporary of Cowper at Westminster, and his most intimate friend. This intercourse was continued in their riper years, on the footing of the most endearing friendship. Unhappily, young Russel was cut off by a premature death,* while bathing in the Thames, amidst all the opening prospects of life, and with accomplishments and virtues that adorned his rank and station. This occurrence inflicted a great moral shock on the sensitive mind of Cowper.

But it was his attachment to Miss Theodora Jane Cowper that formed the eventful era in his early life, and clouded all his future prospects. The relation of this fact is wholly omitted by Hayley, in compliance, we presume, with the express wishes of the family. It was, indeed, understood to be a prohibited subject, and involved in much mystery. The name of this lady was never uttered by Cowper, nor mentioned in his presence; and, after his death, delicacy towards the survivor equally imposed the duty of silence. The brother-in-law of the Editor, the Rev. Dr. Johnson, conscious that a correspondence must have existed between the poet and the fair object of his attachment, requested to know whether he could be furnished with any documents, and permitted, without a violation of delicacy, to lay them before the public. The writer was also commissioned by him to solicit an interview, and to urge the same request, but without success. An intimation was at length conveyed that no documents could see the light till after the decease of the owner. The death of this lady, in the year 1824, at a very advanced age, removed the veil of secrecy, though the leading facts were known by a small circle of friends, through the confidential communications of Lady Hesketh and Dr. Johnson. We now proceed to the de-

* Cowper adopted a profession, but never pursued it with perseverance.

* Shortness of life seems to have been peculiar to this family. The writer well remembers the two last baronets, viz., Sir John Russel, whose form was so weak and fragile, that, when resident at the University of Oxford, he was supported by instruments of steel. He died at the early age of twenty-one. 2ndly. Sir George Russel, his brother, who survived only till his twenty-second year. The editor followed him to his grave. The family residence was at Chequers, in Buckinghamshire, an ancient seat, and restored at great expense by these last direct descendants of their race. Chequers was formerly noted as the place where Hampden, Cromwell, and a few others, held their secret meetings, and concerted their measures of opposition against the government of Charles I. The estate afterwards devolved to Robert Greenhill, Esq.

tails of this transaction. Miss Theodora Cowper was the second daughter of Ashley Cowper, Esq., the poet's uncle, and sister to Lady Hesketh; she was, consequently, own cousin to Cowper. She is described as having been a young lady possessed of great personal attractions, highly accomplished, and distinguished by the qualities that engage affection and regard. It is no wonder that a person of Cowper's susceptibility yielded to so powerful an influence. She soon became the theme of his poetical effusions, which have since been communicated to the public.* They are juvenile compositions, but interesting, as forming the earliest productions of his muse, and recording his attachment to his cousin. Miss Theodora Cowper was by no means insensible to the regards of her admirer, and the father was eventually solicited to ratify her choice. But Mr. Ashley Cowper, attached as he was to his nephew, and anxious to promote the happiness of his daughter, could by no means be induced to listen to the proposition. His objections were founded, first, on the near degree of relationship in which they stood to each other; and secondly, on the inadequacy of Cowper's fortune. From this resolution no entreaty could induce him to depart. The poet, therefore, was compelled to cherish a hopeless passion, which no lapse of time was capable of effacing; and his fair cousin, on her part, discovered a corresponding fidelity.

The subsequent melancholy event, recorded in the Memoir, at once extinguished all further hopes on the subject.

How powerfully his feelings were affected by the death of his friend, Sir William, and by his disappointment in love, may be seen by the following pathetic lines, referring to Miss Theodora Cowper:—

Doom'd as I am, in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past;
Depriv'd of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me and my mistress lost;
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humor, or of spleen!
Still, still, I mourn with each returning day,
Him, snatch'd by fate in early youth away;
And her—through tedious years of doubt and pain
Fix'd in her choice and faithful—but in vain!
O prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear;
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes;
See me—ere yet my destin'd course half done,
Cast forth a wand'rer on a world unknown!
See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!

Such were the preparatory causes that weakened and depressed the mind of Cowper. *The immediate and exciting cause* of his unhappy derangement has already been faithfully disclosed as well as the occasion that ministered to its cure.

Pursuing this interesting and yet painful subject in the order of events, it appears that, after spending nearly ten years in the enjoyment of much inward peace, he was visited in the year 1773, at Olney, with a return, not of his original derangement, but with a severe nervous fever, and a settled depression of spirits. This attack began to subside at the close of the year 1776, though his full powers were not recovered till some time after. What he suffered is feelingly expressed in a letter to Mr. Hill. "Other distempers only batter the walls; but *they* (nervous fevers) creep silently into the citadel, and put the garrison to the sword."*

The death of his brother, the Rev. John Cowper, may have been instrumental to this long indisposition. At the same time we think that his situation at Olney was by no means favorable to his health; and that more time should have been allotted for relaxation and exercise.

In January, 1787, he experienced a fresh attack, though surrounded by the beautiful scenery of Weston; which seems to prove that local causes were not so influential as some have suggested. A much better reason may be assigned in the lamented death of his endeared friend, Mr. Unwin. This illness continued eight months, and greatly enfeebled his health and spirits. "This last tempest," he remarks, in a letter to Mr. Newton, "has left my nerves in a worse condition than it found them; my head, especially, though better informed, is more infirm than ever."† In December, 1791, Mrs. Unwin experienced her first attack: and in May, 1792, it was renewed with aggravated symptoms, during Hayley's visit to Weston. He describes its powerful effect on Cowper's nerves in expressive language, and none can be more expressive than his own, at the close of the same year. "The year ninety-two shall stand chronicled in my remembrance as the most melancholy that I have ever known, except the few weeks that I spent at Eartham."‡ Cowper's mental depression kept pace with the spectacle of her increasing imbecility, till at length, yielding to the pressure of these accumulating sorrows, he sank under the violence of the shock.

The coincidence of these facts is worthy of observation, as they seem to prove that the embers of the original constitutional malady never became extinct, and required only some powerful stimulant to revive the flame. Religious feelings unquestionably concurred, because whatever predominates in the mind furnishes the materials of excitement; but it was not the religion of a creed, for what

* Poems, the Early Productions of William Cowper.

* See p. 58. † See p. 284.
‡ See Letter, Dec. 26, 1792.

creed ever proclaimed the delusion under which Cowper labored?* His persuasion was in opposition to his creed, for he knew that he was once saved, and yet believed that he should be lost, though his creed assured him that, where divine grace had once revealed its saving power, it never failed to perfect its work in mercy—that the Saviour's love is unchangeable, and that whom he hath loved he loveth unto the end (John xiii. 1). His case, therefore, was an exception to his creed, and consequently must be imputed to the operation of other causes.

We trust we have now succeeded in tracing to its true source the origin of Cowper's malady, and that the numerous facts which have been urged must preclude the possibility of future misconception.

There are some distinguishing features in this mysterious malady which are too extraordinary not to be specified. We notice the following:—

1st. The free exercise of his mental powers continued during the whole period of his depression, with the exception of two intervals, from 1773 to 1776, and a season of eight months in the year 1787. With these intermissions of study, all his works were written in moments of depression and unceasing nervous excitement.

It still further shows the singular mechanism of his wonderful mind, that his Montes Glaciales, or Ice Islands, exhibiting decided marks of vigor of genius, were composed in the last stage of his malady—within five weeks of his decease—when his heart was lacerated by sorrow, his imagination seared by dreams, and the heavens over his head were as brass. The public papers had announced a phenomenon, which the voyages of Captains Ross and Parry have now made more familiar, viz., the disruption of immense masses of ice in the North Pole, and their appearance in the German Ocean. Cowper seized this incident as a fit subject for his poetic powers, and produced the poem from which we make the following extract:—

What portents, from what distant region, ride,
Unseen till now in ours, th' astonish'd tide?—
What view we now? more wondrous still! Behold!
Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendor show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?
No. Never such a countless, dazzling store
Had left, unseen, the Ganges' peopled shore—
Whence sprang they then?

* Cowper believed that he had incurred the Divine displeasure, because he did not commit the crime of self-destruction; a persuasion so manifestly absurd as to afford undeniable proof of derangement.

——Far hence, where most severe
Bleak Winter well-nigh saddens all the year,
Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft, as dissolv'd by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff to join the flood below,
He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast
The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile
And long successive ages roll'd the while,
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.
Thus stood, and, unremovable by skill
Or force of man, had stood the structure still;
But that, though firmly fixt, supplanted yet
By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach—and, with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,
Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,
Down went the pond'rous mass.

See Poems.

2ndly. His malady, however oppressive to himself, was not perceptible to others.

The Editor is enabled to state this remarkable fact on the authority of Dr. Johnson, confirmed by the testimony of Lady Throckmorton, and John Higgins, Esq., of Turvey Abbey, formerly of Weston.

There was nothing in his general manner, or intercourse with society, to excite the suspicion of the wretchedness that dwelt within. Among strangers he was at all times reserved and silent, but in the circle of familiar friends, where restraint was banished, not only did he exhibit no marks of gloom, but he could participate in the mirth of others, or inspire it from his own fertile resources of wit and humor. The prismatic colors, so to speak, were discernible through the descending shower. The bow in the heavens was not only emblematic of his imagination, but might be interpreted as the pledge of promised mercy. For it seemed to be graciously ordered that his lively and sportive imagination should be a relief to the gloomy forebodings of his mind; and that, in vouchsafing to him this alleviation, God proclaimed, "Behold, I do set my bow in the cloud, it shall be for a covenant between me and thee."

3rdly. The rare union, in the same mind, of a rich vein of humor with a spirit of profound melancholy was never perhaps so strikingly exemplified as in the celebrated production of John Gilpin. The town resounded with its praises. Henderson recited it to overflowing auditories; Mr. Henry Thornton addressed it to a large party of friends at Mr. Newton's. Laughter might be said to hold both his sides, and the gravest were compelled to acknowledge the power of comic wit. We scarcely know a more extraordinary phenomenon than what is furnished by the history of this performance. For it appears, by the author's own testimony, that it was written "in the saddest mood, and but for that saddest

mood, perhaps, had never been written at all."* It is also known that this depression was not incidental or temporary, but a fixed and settled feeling; that he was in fact absorbed, for the most part, in the profoundest melancholy; that he considered himself to be cut off from the mercy of his God, though his life was blameless and without reproach; and that, finally, having enlightened his country with strains of the sublimest morality, he died the victim of an incurable despair. As a contrast to the inimitable humor of John Gilpin, let us now turn to that most affecting representation which the poet draws of his own mental sufferings, occasioned by the painful depression which has been the subject of so many remarks.

Look where he comes—in this embowered alcove
Stand close concealed, and see a statue move;
Lips busy, and eyes fixt, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
Both fail beneath *a fever's secret sway*,
And like a summer-brook are past away.
This is a sight for pity to peruse,
Till she resemble faintly what she views;
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least.
See Poem on Retirement.

The minute and mournful delineation of mental trouble here submitted to the eye of the reader, and the fact of this living image of woe being a portrait of Cowper drawn by his own hand, impart to it a character of inimitable pathos, and of singular and indescribable interest.

The physical and moral solution of this evil, and its painful influence on the mind, till the cure is administered by an almighty Physician, are beautifully and affectionately described.

Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright;
The screws reversed (a task which if he please
God in a moment executes with ease),
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities, with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which art preceptress nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,

* See p. 143.

Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves—
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by:
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
Retirement.

The lines which follow are important, as proving by his own testimony that, so far from his religious views being the occasion of his wretchedness, it was to this source alone that he looked for consolation and support.

And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill;
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand:
To thee the day-spring and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars, that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
Yet seek Him, in his favor life is found,
All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound:
Then heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth!
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlooked no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.
Retirement.

The Editor has entered thus largely into the consideration of Cowper's depressive malady, because it has been least understood, and subject to the most erroneous misrepresentations, affecting the character of Cowper and the honor of religion. One leading object of the writer's, in engaging in the present undertaking, has been to vindicate both from so injurious an imputation.

We have now to lay before the reader another most interesting document, of which Cowper is the acknowledged author. It contains the affecting account of the last illness and peaceful end of his brother, the Rev. John Cowper, Fellow of Bennet College, Cambridge. The original manuscript was faithfully transcribed by Newton, and then published with a preface, which we have thought proper to retain. It cannot fail to be read with deep interest and edification; and, while it is a monument of Cowper's pious zeal and fraternal love, it is a striking record of the power of divine grace in producing that great change of heart which we deem to be essential to every professing Christian. This document is now extremely scarce, and not accessible but through private sources.*

* We are indebted for this copy to a much esteemed and highly valued friend, the Rev. Charles Bridges.

ADELPHI.

A SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE LAST ILLNESS,

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN COWPER, A.M.

FELLOW OF BENNET COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

WHO FINISHED HIS COURSE WITH JOY, 20th MARCH, 1770.

WRITTEN BY HIS BROTHER,

THE LATE WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, AUTHOR OF "THE TASK," ETC.

FAITHFULLY TRANSCRIBED FROM HIS ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT,

BY JOHN NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY, WOOLNOTH, AND ST MARY, WOOLCHURCH.

Tu supplicanti protinus admoves
Aurem, benignus: pro lachrimis mihi
Risum reducis, pro dolore
Lætitiamque, alacremque plausum.
BUCHANAN, Ps. XXX.

NEWTON'S ORIGINAL PREFACE.

THE Editor's motives, which induce him to publish the following narrative, are chiefly two.

First, that so striking a display of the power and mercy of God may be more generally known to the praise and glory of his grace and the instruction and comfort of his people.

Secondly, the boasted spirit of refinement, the stress laid upon unassisted human reason, and the consequent scepticism to which they lead, and which so strongly mark the character of the present times, are not now confined merely to the dupes of infidelity; but many persons are under their influence, who would be much offended if we charged them with having renounced Christianity. While no theory is admitted in natural history, which is not confirmed by actual and positive experiment, religion is the only thing to which a trial by this test is refused. The very name of vital experimental religion excites contempt and scorn, and provokes resentment. The doctrines of regeneration by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of his continual agency and influence to advance the holiness and comforts of those in whose hearts he has already begun a work of grace, are not only exploded and contradicted by many who profess a regard for the Bible, and by some who have subscribed to the articles and liturgy of our established church, but they who avow an attachment to them are, upon that account, and that account only, considered as hypocrites or visionaries, knaves or fools.

The Editor fears that many unstable persons are misled and perverted by the fine words and fair speeches of those who lie in wait to deceive. But he likewise hopes that, by the blessing of God, a candid perusal of what is here published, respecting the character, sentiments, and happy death of the late Reverend John Cowper, may convince them, some of them at least, of their mistake, and break the snare in which they have been entangled.

JOHN NEWTON.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN COWPER, A.M.

As soon as it had pleased God, after a long and sharp season of conviction, to visit me with the consolations of his grace, it became one of my chief concerns, that my relations might be made partakers of the same mercy. In the first letter I wrote to my brother,* I took occasion to declare what God had done for my soul, and am not conscious that from that period down to his last illness I wilfully neglected an opportunity of engaging him, if it were possible, in conversation of a spiritual kind. When I left St. Alban's, and went to visit him at Cambridge, my heart being full of the subject, I poured it out before him without reserve; and, in all my subsequent dealings with him, so far as I was enabled, took care to show that I had received, not merely a set of notions, but a real impression of the truths of the gospel.

At first I found him ready enough to talk with me upon these subjects; sometimes he would dispute, but always without heat or animosity; and sometimes would endeavor to reconcile the difference of our sentiments, by supposing that, at the bottom, we were both of a mind and meant the same thing.

He was a man of a most candid and ingenuous spirit; his temper remarkably sweet, and in his behavior to me he had always manifested an uncommon affection. His outward conduct, so far as it fell under my notice, or I could learn it by the report of others, was perfectly decent and unblameable. There was nothing vicious in any part of his practice, but, being of a studious, thoughtful turn, he placed his chief delight in the acquisition of learning, and made such acquisitions in it that he had but few rivals in that of a classical kind. He was critically skilled in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, was beginning to make himself master of the Syriac, and perfectly understood the French and Italian, the latter of which he could speak fluently. These attainments, however, and many others in the literary way, he lived heartily to despise, not as useless when sanctified and employed in the service of God, but when sought after for their own sake, and with a view to the praise of men. Learned however as he was, he was easy and cheerful in his conversation, and entirely free from the stiffness which is generally contracted by men devoted to such pursuits.

Thus we spent about two years, conversing as occasion offered, and we generally visited each other once or twice a week, as long as I continued at Huntingdon, upon the leading truths of the gospel. By this time, however, he began to be more reserved; he would hear me patiently but never reply; and this I found, upon his own confession afterward, was the effect of a resolution he had taken, in order to avoid disputes, and to secure the continuance of that peace which had always subsisted between us. When our family removed to Olney, our intercourse became less frequent. We exchanged an annual visit, and, whenever he came amongst us, he observed the same conduct, conforming to all our customs, attending family worship with us, and heard the preaching, received civilly whatever passed in conversation upon the subject, but adhered strictly to the rule he had prescribed to himself, never remarking upon or objecting to anything he heard or saw. This, through the goodness of his natural temper, he was enabled to carry so far that, though some things unavoidably happened which we feared would give him offence, he never took any; for it was not possible to offer him the pulpit, nor when Mr. Newton was with us once at the time of family prayer, could we ask my brother to officiate, though, being himself a minister, and one of our own family for the time, the office seemed naturally to fall into his hands.

In September 1769, I learned by letters from Cambridge that he was dangerously ill. I set out for that place the day after I received them, and found him as ill as I expected. He had taken cold on his return from a journey into Wales; and, lest he should be laid up at a distance from home, had pushed forward as far as he could from Bath with a fever upon

* ". . . . I had a brother once," &c.
The Task, book ii.

him. Soon after his arrival at Cambridge he discharged, unknown to himself, such a prodigious quantity of blood, that the physician ascribed it only to the strength of his constitution that he was still alive; and assured me, that if the discharge should be repeated, he must inevitably die upon the spot. In this state of imminent danger, he seemed to have no more concern about his spiritual interests than when in perfect health. His couch was strewed with volumes of plays, to which he had frequent recourse for amusement. I learned indeed afterwards, that, even at this time, the thoughts of God and eternity would often force themselves upon his mind; but, not apprehending his life to be in danger, and trusting in the morality of his past conduct, he found it no difficult matter to thrust them out again.

As it pleased God that he had no relapse, he presently began to recover strength, and in ten days' time I left him so far restored, that he could ride many miles without fatigue, and had every symptom of returning health. It is probable, however, that though his recovery seemed perfect, this illness was the means which God had appointed to bring down his strength in the midst of his journey, and to hasten on the malady which proved his last.

On the 16th of February, 1770, I was again summoned to attend him, by letters which represented him as so ill that the physician entertained but little hopes of his recovery. I found him afflicted with asthma and dropsy, supposed to be the effect of an imposthume in his liver. He was, however, cheerful when I first arrived, expressed great joy at seeing me, thought himself much better than he had been, and seemed to flatter himself with hopes that he should be well again. My situation at this time was truly distressful. I learned from the physician, that, in this instance, as in the last, he was in much greater danger than he suspected. He did not seem to lay his illness at all to heart, nor could I find by his conversation that he had one serious thought. As often as a suitable occasion offered, when we were free from company and interruption, I endeavored to give a spiritual turn to the discourse; and, the day after my arrival, asked his permission to pray with him, to which he readily consented. I renewed my attempts in this way as often as I could, though without any apparent success: still he seemed as careless and unconcerned as ever; yet I could not but consider his willingness in this instance as a token for good, and observed with pleasure, that though at other times he discovered no mark of seriousness, yet when I spoke to him of the Lord's dealings with myself, he received what I said with affection, would press my hand, and look kindly at me, and seemed to love me the better for it.

On the 21st of the same month he had a violent fit of the asthma, which seized him when he rose, about an hour before noon, and lasted all the day. His agony was dreadful. Having never seen any person afflicted in the same way, I could not help fearing that he would be suffocated; nor was the physician himself without fears of the same kind. This day the Lord was very present with me, and enabled me, as I sat by the poor sufferer's side, to wrestle for a blessing upon him. I observed to him, that though it had pleased God to visit him with great afflictions, yet mercy was mingled with the dispensation. I said, "You have many friends, who love you, and are willing to do all they can to serve you; and so perhaps have others in the like circumstances; but it is not the lot of every sick man, how much soever he may be beloved, to have a friend that can pray for him." He replied, "That is true, and I hope God will have mercy upon me." His love for me from this time became very remarkable; there was a tenderness in it more than was merely natural; and he generally expressed it by calling for blessings upon me in the most affectionate terms, and with a look and manner not to be described. At night, when he was quite worn out with the fatigue of laboring for breath, and could get no rest, his asthma still continuing, he turned to me and said, with a melancholy air, "Brother, I seem to be marked out for misery; you know some people are so." That moment I felt my heart enlarged, and such a persuasion of the love of God towards him was wrought in my soul, that I replied with confidence, and, as if I had authority given me to say it, "But that is not your case; you are marked out for mercy." Through the whole of this most painful dispensation, he was blessed with a degree of patience and resignation to the will of God, not always seen in the behavior of established Christians under sufferings so great as his. I never heard a murmuring word escape him; on the contrary, he would often say, when his pains were most acute, "I only wish it may please God to enable me to suffer without complaining; I have no right to complain." Once he said, with a loud voice, "Let thy rod and thy staff support and comfort me:" and "Oh that it were with me as in times past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon my tabernacle!" One evening, when I had been expressing my hope that the Lord would show him mercy, he replied, "I hope he will; I am sure I pretend to nothing." Many times he spoke of himself in terms of the greatest self-abasement, which I cannot now particularly remember. I thought I could discern, in these expressions, the glimpses of approaching day, and have no doubt at present but that the Spirit of God was gradually preparing him, in a way of true humiliation,

for that bright display of gospel-grace which he was soon after pleased to afford him.*

On Saturday the 10th of March, about three in the afternoon, he suddenly burst into tears, and said, with a loud cry, "Oh, forsake me not!" I went to his bed-side, when he grasped my hand, and presently, by his eyes and countenance, I found that he was in prayer. Then turning to me, he said, "Oh, brother, I am full of what I could say to you." The nurse asked him if he would have any hartshorn or lavender. He replied, "None of these things will serve my purpose." I said, "But I know what would, my dear, don't I?" He answered, "You do, brother."

Having continued some time silent, he said, "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth,"—then, after a pause, "Ay, and he is able to do it too."

I left him for about an hour, fearing lest he should fatigue himself with talking, and because my surprise and joy were so great that I could hardly bear them. When I returned, he threw his arms about my neck, and, leaning his head against mine, he said, "Brother, if I live, you and I shall be more like one another than we have been. But whether I live or live not, all is well, and will be so; I know it will; I have felt that which I never felt before; and am sure that God has visited me with this sickness to teach me what I was too proud to learn in health. I never had satisfaction till now. The doctrines I had been used to referred me to myself for the foundation of my hopes, and there I could find nothing to rest upon. The sheet-anchor of the soul was wanting. I thought you wrong, yet wished to believe as you did. I found myself unable to believe, yet always thought that I should one day be brought to do so. You suffered more than I have done, before you believed these truths; but our sufferings, though different in their kind and measure, were directed to the same end. I hope he has taught me that which he teaches none but his own. I hope so. These things were foolishness to me once, but now I have a firm foundation, and am satisfied."

In the evening, when I went to bid him good night, he looked steadfastly in my face, and, with great solemnity in his air and manner, taking me by the hand, resumed the discourse in these very words: "As empty, and yet full; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things—I see the rock upon which I once split, and I see the rock of my salvation. I have peace in myself, and if I live, I hope it will be that I may be made a messenger of peace to others. I have heard *that* in a moment, which I could not have learned by reading many books for many years. I have often studied these points, and studied them with great attention, but was blinded by prejudice; and, unless He, who alone is worthy to unloose the seals, had opened the book to me, I had been blinded still. Now they appear so plain, that though I am convinced no comment could ever have made me understand them, I wonder I did not see them before. Yet, great as my doubts and difficulties were, they have only served to pave the way, and being solved, they make it plainer. The light I have received comes late, but it is a comfort to me that I never made the gospel-truths a subject of ridicule. Though I dissented from the persuasion and the ways of God's people, I ever thought them respectable, and therefore not proper to be made a jest of. The evil I suffer is the consequence of my descent from the corrupt original stock, and of my own personal transgressions; the good I enjoy comes to me as the overflowing of his bounty; but the crown of all his mercies is this, that he has given me a Saviour, and not only the Saviour of mankind, brother, but *my* Saviour.

"I should delight to see the people at Olney, but am not worthy to appear amongst them." He wept at speaking these words, and repeated them with emphasis. "I should rejoice in an hour's conversation with Mr. Newton, and, if I live, shall have much discourse with him upon these subjects, but am so weak in body, that at present I could not bear it." At the same time he gave me to understand, that he had been five years inquiring after the truth, that is, from the time of my first visit to him after I left St. Alban's, and that, from the very day of his ordination, which was ten years ago, he had been dissatisfied with his own views of the Gospel, and sensible of their defect and obscurity; that he had always had a sense of the importance of the ministerial charge, and had used to consider himself accountable for his doctrine no less than his practice; that he could appeal to the Lord for his sincerity in all that time, and had never wilfully erred, but always been desirous of coming to the knowledge of the truth. He added, that the moment when he sent forth that cry* was the moment when light was darted into his soul; that he had thought much about these things in the course of his illness, but never till that instant was able to understand them.

It was remarkable that, from the very instant when he was first enlightened, he was also wonderfully strengthened in body, so that from the tenth to the fourteenth of March we all entertained hopes of his recovery. He was himself very sanguine in his

* There is a beautiful illustration of this sudden and happy change in Cowper's poem entitled "Hope."

"As when a felon whom his country's laws," &c.

* On the 10th of March, vide supra.

expectations of it, but frequently said that his desire of recovery extended no farther than his hope of usefulness; adding, "Unless I may live to be an instrument of good to others, it were better for me to die now."

As his assurance was clear and unshaken, so he was very sensible of the goodness of the Lord to him in that respect. On the day when his eyes were opened, he turned to me, and, in a low voice, said, "What a mercy it is to a man in my condition, to *know* his acceptance! I am completely satisfied of mine." On another occasion, speaking to the same purpose, he said, "This bed would be a bed of misery, and it is so—but it is likewise a bed of joy and a bed of discipline. Was I to die this night, I know I should be happy. This assurance I hope is quite consistent with the word of God. It is built upon a sense of my own utter insufficiency, and the all-sufficiency of Christ." At the same time he said, "Brother, I have been building my glory upon a sandy foundation; I have labored night and day to perfect myself in things of no profit; I have sacrificed my health to these pursuits, and am now suffering the consequence of my misspent labor. But how contemptible do the writers I once highly valued now appear to me! 'Yea, doubtless, I count all things loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' I must now go to a new school. I have many things to learn. I succeeded in my former pursuits. I wanted to be highly applauded, and I was so. I was flattered up to the height of my wishes: now, I must learn a new lesson."

On the evening of the thirteenth, he said, "What comfort have I in this bed, miserable as I seem to be! Brother, I love to look at you. I see now who was right, and who was mistaken. But it seems wonderful that such a dispensation should be necessary to enforce what seems so very plain. I wish myself at Olney; you have a good river there, better than all the rivers of Damascus. What a scene is passing before me! Ideas upon these subjects crowd upon me faster than I can give them utterance. How plain do many texts appear, to which, after consulting all the commentators, I could hardly affix a meaning; and now I have their true meaning without any comment at all. There is but one key to the New Testament; there is but one interpreter. I cannot describe to you, nor shall ever be able to describe, what I felt in the moment when it was given to me. May I make a good use of it! How I shudder when I think of the danger I have just escaped! I had made up my mind upon these subjects, and was determined to hazard all upon the justness of my own opinions."

Speaking of his illness, he said, he had been followed night and day from the very beginning of it with this text; *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.* This notice was fulfilled to him, though not in such a sense as my desires of his recovery prompted me to put upon it. His remarkable amendment soon appeared to be no more than a present supply of strength and spirits, that he might be able to speak of the better life which God had given him, which was no sooner done than he relapsed as suddenly as he had revived. About this time he formed a purpose of receiving the sacrament, induced to it principally by a desire of setting his seal to the truth, in presence of those who were strangers to the change which had taken place in his sentiments. It must have been administered to him by the Master of the College, to whom he designed to have made this short declaration, "If I die, I die in the belief of the doctrines of the Reformation, and of the Church of England, as it was at the time of the Reformation." But, his strength declining apace, and his pains becoming more severe, he could never find a proper opportunity of doing it. His experience was rather peace than joy, if a distinction may be made between joy and that heartfelt peace which he often spoke of in the most comfortable terms; and which he expressed by a heavenly smile upon his countenance under the bitterest bodily distress. His words upon this subject once were these. "How wonderful is it that God should look upon man, especially that he should look upon *me!* Yet he sees me, and takes notice of all that I suffer. I see him too; he is present before me, and I hear him say, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.*" Matt. xi. 28.

On the fourteenth, in the afternoon, I perceived that the strength and spirits which had been afforded him were suddenly withdrawn, so that by the next day his mind became weak, and his speech roving and faltering. But still, at intervals, he was enabled to speak of divine things with great force and clearness. On the evening of the fifteenth, he said, "'There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.' That text has been sadly misunderstood by me as well as by others. Where is that just person to be found? Alas! what must have become of me, if I had died this day, se'nnight? What should I have had to plead? My own righteousness! *That* would have been of great service to me, to be sure. Well, whither next? Why, to the mountains to fall upon us, and to the hills to cover us. I am not duly thankful for the mercy I have received. Perhaps I may ascribe some part of my insensibility to my great weakness of body. I hope at least that if I was better in health, it would be better with me in these respects also."

The next day, perceiving that his under

standing began to suffer by the extreme weakness of his body, he said, "I have been vain of my understanding and of my acquirements in this place; and now God has made me little better than an idiot, as much as to say, now be proud if you can. Well, while I have any senses left, my thoughts will be poured out in the praise of God. I have an interest in Christ, in his blood and sufferings, and my sins are forgiven me. Have I not cause to praise him? When my understanding fails me quite, as I think it will soon, then he will pity my weakness."

Though the Lord intended that his warfare should be short, yet a warfare he was to have, and to be exposed to a measure of conflict with his own corruptions. His pain being extreme, his powers of recollection much impaired, and the Comforter withholding for a season his sensible support, he was betrayed into a fretfulness and impatience of spirit which had never been permitted to show itself before. This appearance alarmed me, and, having an opportunity afforded me by everybody's absence, I said to him, "You were happier last Saturday than you are to-day. Are you entirely destitute of the consolations you then spoke of? And do you not sometimes feel comfort flowing into your heart from a sense of your acceptance with God?" He replied, "Sometimes I do, but sometimes I am left to desperation." The same day, in the evening, he said, "Brother, I believe you are often uneasy, lest what lately passed should come to nothing." I replied by asking him, whether, when he found his patience and his temper fail, he endeavored to pray for power against his corruptions? He answered, "Yes, a thousand times in a day. But I see myself odiously vile and wicked. If I die in this illness, I beg you will place no other inscription over me than such as may just mention my name and the parish where I was minister; for that I ever had a being, and what sort of a being I had, cannot be too soon forgot. I was just beginning to be a deist, and had long desired to be so; and I will own to you what I never confessed before, that my function and the duties of it were a weariness to me which I could not bear. Yet, wretched creature and beast as I was, I was esteemed religious, though I lived without God in the world." About this time, I reminded him of the account of Janeway, which he once read at my desire. He said he had laughed at it in his own mind, and accounted it mere madness and folly. "Yet base as I am," said he, "I have no doubt now but God has accepted me also, and forgiven me all my sins."

I then asked him what he thought of my narrative?* He replied, "I thought it strange, and ascribed much of it to the state in which you had been. When I came to visit you in London, and found you in that deep distress, I would have given the universe to have administered some comfort to you. You may remember that I tried every method of doing it. When I found that all my attempts were vain, I was shocked to the greatest degree. I began to consider your sufferings as a judgment upon you, and my inability to alleviate them, as a judgment upon myself. When Mr. M.* came, he succeeded in a moment.' This surprised me; but it does not surprise me now. He had the key to your heart, which I had not. That which filled me with disgust against my office as a minister, was the same ill success which attended me in my own parish. There I endeavored to soothe the afflicted, and to reform the unruly by warning and reproof; but all that I could say in either case, was spoken to the wind, and attended with no effect."

There is that in the nature of salvation by grace, when it is truly and experimentally known, which prompts every person to think himself the most extraordinary instance of its power. Accordingly, my brother insisted upon the precedence in this respect; and upon comparing his case with mine, would by no means allow my deliverance to have been so wonderful as his own. He observed that, from the beginning, both his manner of life and his connexions had been such as had a natural tendency to blind his eyes, and to confirm and rivet his prejudices against the truth. Blameless in his outward conduct, and having no open immorality to charge himself with, his acquaintance had been with men of the same stamp, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised the doctrines of the cross. Such were all who, from his earliest days, he had been used to propose to himself as patterns for his imitation. Not to go farther back, such was the clergyman under whom he received the first rudiments of his education; such was the schoolmaster, under whom he was prepared for the University; and such were all the most admired characters there, with whom he was most ambitious of being connected. He lamented the dark and Christless condition of the place, where learning and morality were all in all, and where, if a man was possessed of these qualifications, he neither doubted himself, nor did anybody else question, the safety of his state. He concluded, therefore, that to show the fallacy of such appearances, and to root out the prejudices which long familiarity with them had fastened upon his mind, required a more than ordinary exertion of divine power, and that the grace of God was more clearly manifested in such a work than in the con-

* Cowper's Memoir of Himself.

* The Rev. Martin Madan.

version of one like me, who had no outside righteousness to boast of, and who, if I was ignorant of the truth, was not, however, so desperately prejudiced against it.

His thoughts, I suppose, had been led to this subject, when, one afternoon, while I was writing by the fire-side, he thus addressed himself to the nurse, who sat at his bolster. "Nurse, I have lived three-and-thirty years, and I will tell you how I have spent them. When I was a boy, they taught me Latin; and because I was the son of a gentleman, they taught me Greek. These I learned under a sort of private tutor; at the age of fourteen, or thereabouts, they sent me to a public school, where I learned more Latin and Greek, and, last of all, to this place, where I have been learning more Latin and Greek still. Now has not this been a blessed life, and much to the glory of God?" Then directing his speech to me, he said, "Brother, I was going to say I was born in such a year; but I correct myself: I would rather say, in such a year I came into the world. You know when I was born."

As long as he expected to recover, the souls committed to his care were much upon his mind. One day, when none was present but myself, he prayed thus:—"O Lord, thou art good; goodness is thy very essence, and thou art the fountain of wisdom. I am a poor worm, weak and foolish as a child. Thou has entrusted many souls unto me; and I have not been able to teach them, because I knew thee not myself. Grant me ability, O Lord, for I can do nothing without thee, and give me grace to be faithful."

In a time of severe and continual pain, he smiled in my face, and said, "Brother, I am as happy as a king." And, the day before he died, when I asked him what sort of a night he had had, he replied, a "sad night, not a wink of sleep." I said, "Perhaps, though, your mind has been composed, and you have been enabled to pray?" "Yes," said he, "I have endeavored to spend the hours in the thoughts of God and prayer; I have been much comforted, and all the comfort I got came to me in this way."

The next morning I was called up to be witness of his last moments. I found him in a deep sleep, lying perfectly still, and seemingly free from pain. I stayed with him till they pressed me to quit his room, and in about five minutes after I had left him he died; sooner, indeed, than I expected, though for some days there had been no hopes of his recovery. His death at that time was rather extraordinary; at least, I thought it so; for, when I took leave of him the night before, he did not seem worse or weaker than he had been, and, for aught that appeared, might have lasted many days; but the Lord, in whose sight the death of his saints is precious, cut short his sufferings, and gave him a speedy and peaceful departure.

He died at seven in the morning, on the 20th of March, 1770.

Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From Thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honor, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavor and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But, oh! Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown.
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.
The Task, book v.

The fraternal love and piety of Cowper are beautifully illustrated in this most interesting document. No sooner had he experienced the value of religion, and its inward peace and hope, in his own heart, than he feels solicitous to communicate the blessing to others. True piety is always diffusive. It does not, like the sordid miser, hoard up the treasure for self-enjoyment, but is enriched by giving, and impoverished only by withholding.

Friends, parents, kindred, first it will embrace,
Our country next, and next all human race.

The prejudices of his brother, and yet his mild and amiable spirit of forbearance; the zeal of Cowper, and its final happy result, impart to this narrative a singular degree of interest. Others would have been deterred by apparent difficulties; but true zeal is full of faith, as well as of love, and does not contemplate man's resistance, but God's mighty power.

The example of John Cowper furnishes also a remarkable evidence that a man may be distinguished by the highest endowments of human learning, and yet be ignorant of that knowledge which is emphatically called life eternal.

The distinction between the knowledge that is derived from books, and the wisdom that cometh from above, is drawn by Cowper with a happy and just discrimination.

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftimes no connexion—knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude, unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
'Till smooth'd, and squar'd, and fitted to its place
Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
The Task, book vi.

It is important to know how far the powers of human reason extend in matters of religion, and where they fail. Reason can ex-

amine the claims of a divine revelation, and determine its authority by the most conclusive arguments. It can expose error, and establish the truth; attack infidelity within its own entrenchments, and carry its victorious arms into the very camp of the enemy. It can defend all the outworks of religion, and vindicate its insulted majesty. But at this point its powers begin to fail. It cannot confer a *spiritual* apprehension of the truth in the understanding, nor a *spiritual* reception of it in the heart. This is the province of grace. "No man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God, *and he to whom the Spirit hath revealed them.*" "Not by might, nor by power, *but by my Spirit*, saith the Lord." Men of learning endeavor to attain to the knowledge of divine things, in the same manner as they acquire an insight into human things, that is, by human power and human teaching. Whereas divine things require a divine power and divine teaching. "All thy children shall be taught of God." Not that human reason is superseded in its use. Man is always a rational and moral agent. But it is reason, conscious of its own weakness, simple in its views, and humble in its spirit, enlightened, guided, and regulated in all its researches by the grace and wisdom that is from above. John Cowper expresses the substance of this idea in the following emphatic words:—"I have learned *that* in a moment, which I could not have learned by reading many books for many years. I have often studied these points, and studied them with great attention, but was blinded by prejudice; and unless He, who alone is worthy to unloose the seals, had opened the book to me, I had been blinded still."

The information supplied respecting John Cowper by preceding biographers is brief and scanty. The following are the particulars which the Editor has succeeded in obtaining. John Cowper was considered to be one of the best scholars in the university of Cambridge. In 1759, he obtained the Chancellor's gold medal, and in 1762 gained both the prizes for Masters of Arts. He was subsequently elected Fellow of Bennet, and became private tutor to Lord Walsingham. He translated the four first books of the Henriade; his brother William, it is said, the four next (Hayley states two cantos, only, and alleges Cowper's own authority for the fact); E. B. Green, Esq., a relative of Dr. Green, the master of the college,* the ninth, and Robert Lloyd the tenth book. It appeared in Smollett's edition, in 1762, but the writer has not been able to procure a copy. He afterwards engaged in an edition of Apollonius Rhodius,† when his sedentary and studious habits produced an imposthume in the liver, which brought him to his grave in the thirty-third year of his age. He was buried at Foxton in Cambridgeshire, of which place he was rector.

Dr. Bennet, Bishop of Cloyne, in a letter addressed to Dr. Parr, bears the following honorable testimony to his merits.

"TO THE REV. DR. PARR.

"Emanuel College, April 18, 1770.

"We have lost the best classic and most liberal thinker in our university, Cowper of Ben'et. He sat so long at his studies, that the posture gave rise to an abscess in his liver, and he fell a victim to learning. The goddess has so few votaries here, that she resolved to take the best offering we had, and she employed Apollonius Rhodius to strike the blow. I write the author again, Apollonius Rhodius. Cowper had labored hard at an edition of him for several years, and applied so much to his favorite author, that it cost his life. I shall make a bold push for his papers. Yet, what omens I have! Melancthon did but think of a translation, and he died. Hoeltzlinus owns he wrote the latter part of the annotations, manu lassissimâ et corpore imbecillo, and died before he put the last hand to them. Cowper collates all the editions, makes a new translation, and follows his predecessors. One would think that by some unknown fate, or by some curse of his master, Callimachus, our poet was doomed to remain in obscurity. His enemies may say, that the dulness of his verses bears some resemblance to the torpedo, and benumbs or kills whatever touches it."—*See Dr. Parr's Works*, vol. vii. p. 75.

The following elegy was also composed in honor of his memory by one of his fellow collegians, which evinces the high sense entertained of his character and classical attainments.

ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. JOHN COWPER, OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, BY A FELLOW COLLEGIAN.

Where art thou, Moschus, and where are we all?
Thou from high Helicon's muse-haunted hill
Advanc'd to Sion's mount celestial:
Encumber'd we with earth and sorrow still.

Before the throne thy golden lyre is strung,
Seraphic descant fills thy raptur'd mind:
On Camus' willows pale our harps are hung;
Our footsteps linger on his banks behind.

The chosen Lawgiver from Pisgah's hill
His wond'ring eyes around in transport threw:
On earthly Canaan having gaz'd his fill,
To heavenly Canaan's glories quick withdrew.

* He was afterwards Bishop of Lincoln.

† The subject of this poem is the Argonautic expedition under Jason.

So, nurst in sacred and in classic lore,
With varied science at its fountain fraught,
From human knowledge to th' exhaustless store
Of heaven he stole to taste the fuller draught.

What boots the beauty of the classic page,
And what philosophy's sublimer rule,
What all th' advances of maturing age,
If dies the wise man as departs the fool?

Master of Greece's thundering eloquence,
The force of Roman grace to him was known;
The well-turn'd period, join'd with manly sense:
Sage criticism mark'd him for her own.

Ah! what avails the power of harmony,
The poet's melody, the critic's skill!
The verse may live, yet must the maker die;
Such is stern Atropos's solemn will.

Sweet bard of Rhodes,* bright star of Egypt's court,
Whom Ptolemy's discerning bounty drew
To guard fair science in the learned resort,
Thy muse alone can pay the tribute due.

Thy muse, that paints Medea's frantic love,
And all the transports of the enamor'd maid,
Who dared each strongest obstacle remove,
Her reason and her art by love betray'd.

While hardy Jason ploughs old Ocean's plain,
First of the Greeks to tempt Barbarian seas,
With him we share the dangers of the main,
Nor dread the crash of the Symplegades.

Vain wish! thy deathless heroes should commend
Thy verse to fame, and bid it sweeter sound.
He who thy name's revival did intend,
In bloom of youth is buried under ground.†

So, nested on the rock, the parent dove
Sees down the cleft her callow offspring fall;
Full little may its chirping plaints behove;
She only hears, but cannot help its call.‡

Like the fair swan of fame, the grateful muse
Assiduous tends on Lethe's barren bank,
To raise the name that envious time would lose,
Where many millions erst forever sank.

While yet I wait, thou ever-honor'd shade,
Some better bard should the memorial rear,
The debt to friendship due by me be paid,
Weak in poetic fire, in friendship's zeal sincere.

We add the letter addressed by Cowper to his friend Mr. Unwin on this occasion.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

March 31, 1770.

My dear Friend,—I am glad that the Lord made you a fellow-laborer with us in praying my dear brother out of darkness into light. It was a blessed work; and when it shall be your turn to die in the Lord, and to rest from all your labors, that work shall follow you. I once entertained hopes of his recovery: from the moment when it pleased God to give him light in his soul, there was, for four days, such a visible amendment in his body as surprised us all. Dr. Glynn himself was puzzled, and began to think that all his threatening conjectures would fail of their accomplishment. I am well satisfied that it was thus ordered, not for his own sake, but for the sake of us, who had been so deeply concerned for his spiritual welfare, that he might be able to give such evident proof of the work of God upon his soul as should leave no doubt behind it. As to his friends at Cambridge, they knew nothing of the matter. He never spoke of these things but to myself; nor to me, when others were within hearing, except that he sometimes would speak in the presence of the nurse. He knew well to make the distinction between those who could understand him and those who could not; and that he was not in circumstances to maintain such a controversy as a declaration of his new views and sentiments would have exposed him to. Just after his death, I spoke of this change to a dear friend of his, a fellow of the college, who had attended him through all his sickness with assiduity and tenderness. But he did not understand me.

I now proceed to mention such particulars as I can recollect; and which I had not opportunity to insert in my letters to Olney; for I left Cambridge suddenly, and sooner than I expected. He was deeply impressed with a sense of the difficulties he should have to encounter, if it should please God to raise him again. He saw the necessity of being faithful, and the opposition he should expose himself to by being so. Under the weight of these thoughts, he one day broke out in the following prayer, when only myself was with him. "O Lord, thou art light; and in thee is no darkness at all. Thou art the fountain of all wisdom, and it is essential to thee to be good and gracious. I am a child; O Lord, teach me how I shall conduct myself! Give me the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove! Bless the souls thou hast committed to the care of thy helpless miserable creature, who has no wisdom or knowledge of his own, and make me faithful to them, for thy mercy's sake!" Another time he said, "How wonderful it is, that God should look upon man; and how much more wonderful that he should look upon such a worm as I am! Yet he does look upon me, and takes the exactest notice of all my sufferings. He is present, and I see him (I mean, by faith), and he stretches out his arms towards me,"—and he then stretched out his own—"and he says, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy

* Apollonius Rhodius. He had the charge of the celebrated library at Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy.

† John Cowper.

‡ The idea in this stanza is taken from the 4th book of Apollonius, line 1298.

laden, and I will give you rest!'" He smiled and wept, when he spoke these words. When he expressed himself upon these subjects, there was a weight and dignity in his manner such as I never saw before. He spoke with the greatest deliberation, making a pause at the end of every sentence; and there was something in his air and in the tone of his voice inexpressibly solemn, unlike himself, and unlike what I had ever seen in another.

This had God wrought. I have praised him for his marvellous act, and have felt a joy of heart upon the subject of my brother's death, such as I never felt but in my own conversion. He is now before the throne; and yet a little while and we shall meet, never more to be divided. Yours, my very dear friend, with my affectionate respects to yourself and yours, W. C.

Postscript.—A day or two before his death, he grew so weak and was so very ill, that he required continual attendance, so that he had neither strength nor opportunity to say much to me. Only the day before, he said he had had a sleepless, but a composed and quiet night. I asked him, if he had been able to collect his thoughts. He replied, "All night long I have endeavored to think upon God and to continue in prayer. I had great peace and comfort; and what comfort I had came in that way." When I saw him the next morning at seven o'clock he was dying, fast asleep, and exempted, in all appearance, from the sense of those pangs which accompany dissolution. I shall be glad to hear from you, my dear friend, when you can find time to write, and are so inclined. The death of my beloved brother teems with many useful lessons. May God seal the instruction upon our hearts!

Besides the documents already inserted, Cowper translated the narrative of Mr. Van Lier, a minister of the Reformed Church, at the Cape of Good Hope. Mr. Van Lier was born in Holland, in the year 1764; his mother was pious, and brought him up in the principles of true religion, endeavoring from his early youth to direct his mind to the ministry. After the usual course of education, he entered at the University, where, though he did not neglect his studies, he forgot his God. His talents seem to have been considerable, his imagination ardent, but his passions not under sufficient control; and, with all the elements that might have formed a great character, by the misapplication of his time, opportunities, and faculties, he became vicious, and subsequently a sceptic. God, in mercy, exercised him with a series of trials, but the impression was always ultimately effaced—till at length the blow reached him which lacerated his heart, extinguished all his hopes of earthly happiness, and thus finally brought him to God. Among the excellent books that contributed to dispel his errors, he specified the "Cardiphonia" of Newton with grateful acknowledgment. It is justly considered the best of all his works, and has been made eminently useful. Mr. Van Lier subsequently wrote a narrative, in Latin, containing an account of his conversion, and of all the remarkable events of his life. This narrative he addressed to Newton, at whose request it was translated by Cowper. It was published under the title of "The Power of Grace illustrated." Interesting as are its contents, yet, as they comprise nearly two hundred pages, we find it impossible to allow space for its insertion, though it is well entitled to appear in a separate form.

He concludes his narrative in these words: "O happy and glorious hour, when I shall be delivered from all trouble and sin, from this body of death, from the wicked world, and from the snares of Satan! when I shall appear before my Saviour without spot, and shall so behold his glory, and be filled with his presence, as to be wholly and forever engaged in adoration, admiration, gratitude, and love!"

As we are now drawing towards the conclusion of this undertaking, some reference is due to names once honored by Cowper's friendship, and perpetuated in his works. A distinguished place is due to the Rev. William Cawthorne Unwin. His death has been recorded in a former volume, as well as his burial in the cathedral at Winchester. A Latin epitaph was composed on this occasion by Cowper, but objected to by a relative of the family, because it adverted to his mother's early prayers that God might incline his heart to the ministry. We subjoin the epitaph which replaced the pious and classical composition of Cowper.

IN MEMORY OF THE

REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN, M.A.

RECTOR OF STOCK, IN ESSEX.

He was educated at the Charter-house, in London, under the Rev. Dr. Crusius; and, having gone through the education of that school he was at an early period admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge. He died in this city, the 29th of Nov., 1786, aged forty-one years, leaving a widow and three young children.

(The above is on a flat stone in the cathedral.)

And is this the memorial of the interesting and pious Unwin? Shall no monumental tablet record that he was "the endeared and valued friend of Cowper?" We have seldom seen so cold and *jejune* an epitaph to com-

memorate a man distinguished by so many virtues, and associated with such interesting recollections. We are happy in being enabled to furnish a testimony more worthy of him in the following letter, addressed by Cowper to the present Lord Carrington.

TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.*

Weston-Underwood, near Olney, Dec. 9, 1786.

My dear Sir,—We have indeed suffered a great loss by the death of our friend Unwin; and the shock that attended it was the more severe, as till within a few hours of his decease there seemed to be no very alarming symptoms. All the account that we received from Mr. Henry Thornton, who acted like a true friend on the occasion, and with a tenderness toward all concerned that does him great honor, encouraged our hopes of his recovery; and Mrs. Unwin herself found him on her arrival at Winchester so cheerful, and in appearance so likely to live, that her letter also seemed to promise us all that we could wish on the subject. But an unexpected turn in his distemper, which suddenly seized his bowels, dashed all our hopes, and deprived us almost immediately of a man whom we must ever regret. His mind having been from his infancy deeply tinctured with religious sentiments, he was always impressed with a sense of the importance of the great change of all; and, on former occasions, when at any time he found himself indisposed, was consequently subject to distressing alarms and apprehensions. But in this last instance his mind was from the first composed and easy; his fears were taken away, and succeeded by such a resignation as warrants us in saying, "that God made all his bed in his sickness." I believe it is always thus, where the heart, though upright towards God, as Unwin's assuredly was, is yet troubled with the fear of death. When death indeed comes, he is either welcome, or at least has lost his sting.

I have known many such instances, and his mother, from the moment that she learned with what tranquillity he was favored in his last illness, for that very reason expected it would be his last. Yet not with so much certainty, but that the favorable accounts of him at length, in a great measure, superseded that persuasion.

She begs me to assure you, my dear sir, how sensible she is, as well as myself, of the kindness of your inquiries. She suffers this stroke, not with more patience and submission than I expected, for I never knew her hurried by any affliction into the loss of either, but in appearance at least, and at present, with less injury to health than I apprehended. She observed to me, after reading your kind letter, that though it was a proof of the greatness of her loss, yet it afforded her pleasure, though a melancholy one, to see how much her son had been loved and valued by such a person as yourself.

Mrs. Unwin wrote to her daughter-in-law, to invite her and the family hither, hoping that a change of scene, and a situation so pleasant as this, may be of service to her. but we have not yet received her answer. I have good hope, however, that, great as her affliction must be, she will yet be able to support it, for she well knows whither to resort for consolation.

The virtues and amiable qualities of our friends are the things for which we most wish to keep them; but they are, on the other hand, the very things that in particular ought to reconcile us to their departure. We find ourselves sometimes connected with, and engaged in affection, too, to a person of whose readiness and fitness for another life we cannot have the highest opinion. The death of such men has a bitterness in it, both to themselves and survivors, which, thank God, is not to be found in the death of Unwin.

I know, my dear sir, how much you valued him, and I know also, how much he valued you. With respect to him, all is well; and of you, if I should survive you, which, perhaps, is not very probable, I shall say the same.

In the meantime, believe me, with the warmest wishes for your health and happiness, and with Mrs. Unwin's affectionate respects,

Yours, my dear sir,
Most faithfully, W. C.

Joseph Hill, Esq., survived Cowper many years, and lived to an advanced age. He formerly resided in Great Queen Street, and afterwards in Saville Row, and was eminent in his profession. His widow survived him, and died in the year 1824. The letters addressed to him by Cowper were arranged by Dr. Johnson, and ornamented with a suitable binding. They were finally left as an heirloom at Wargrave, near Henley. Joseph Jekyll, Esq., the barrister, once celebrated for his wit and humor, succeeded to that property, and still survives at the moment in which we are writing.

Samuel Rose, Esq., after a comparatively short career of professional eminence, was seized with a rheumatic fever, which he caught at Horsham, in attending the Sussex sessions, in 1804. He died in the thirty-eighth year of his age, declaring to those around him, "I have lived long enough to review my grounds for confidence, and I have unspeakable comfort in assuring those I love that I am daily more reconciled in leaving the world now than at a later period."

* Afterwards created Lord Carrington.

Cowper's sentiments of him are expressed in the following letter.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 2, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I told you lately, that I had an ambition to introduce to your acquaintance my valuable friend, Mr. Rose. He is now before you. You will find him a person of genteel manners and agreeable conversation. As to his other virtues and good qualities, which are many, and such as are not often found in men of his years, I consign them over to your own discernment, perfectly sure that none of them will escape you. I give you joy of each other, and remain, my dear old friend, most truly yours,

W. C.

In recalling the name of Lady Austen, it is sufficient to entitle her to grateful remembrance, that it is to her we are indebted for the first suggestion of the poem of "The Task," that lasting monument of the fame of Cowper. It has also been recorded that she subsequently furnished the materials for the story of John Gilpin.

Her maiden name was Richardson; she was married very early in life to Sir Robert Austen, Baronet, and resided with him in France, where he died. After this event, she lived with her sister Mrs. Jones, the wife of the Rev. Mr. Jones, minister of Clifton, near Olney. It was thus that her intercourse commenced with Cowper. In a subsequent period, she was married to a native of France, M. de Tardiff, a gentleman, and a poet, who has expressed, in some elegant French verses, his just and deep sense of her accomplished, endearing character. In visiting Paris with him in the course of the summer of 1802, she sank under the fatigue of the excursion, and died in that city on the 12th of August. It is due to the memory of this lady to rescue her name from a surmise injurious to her sincerity and honor; and the Editor rejoices that he possesses the means of affording her what he conceives to be an ample justification. In the published correspondence of the late respected Alexander Knox, Esq., a doubt is expressed how far she is not chargeable with endeavoring to supplant Mrs. Unwin in the affections of Cowper. It is already recorded that a breach occurred between the two ladies, and that the poet, with a sensitiveness and delicacy that reflect the highest credit on his feelings and judgment, relinquished the society of Lady Austen from that period. They never met again. There is no direct charge conveyed by Mr. Knox, but there is evidently expressed the language of doubt and surmise. Local impressions are often the best interpretation of questionable occurrences. With this view the Editor has endeavored to trace the nature of the rupture, on the spot, by a communication with surviving parties. From these sources of inquiry it appears that Lady Austen was a woman of great wit and vivacity, and possessed the power of exciting much interest by her manner and conversation—that Mrs. Unwin, who was of a more sedate and quiet character, seeing the ascendancy that Lady Austen thus acquired, became jealous, and that a rupture was the consequence. Mr. Andrews, an intelligent inhabitant of Olney, who is my informant, assured me that such was the substance of the case, and that the rest was mere surmise and conjecture. On my asking him whether he knew the impressions on Mr. Scott's mind with regard to this event, he added, "that he himself asked Mr. Scott the question, and that his reply was, 'Who can be surprised that two women should be continually in the society of one man, and quarrel sooner or later with each other?'" The blunt and honest reply of Mr. Scott we apprehend to be the best commentary on the transaction. There may be jealousies in friendship as well as in love; and the possibility of female rivalship is sufficient to account for the rupture, without the intervention of either friendship or love.

From Mrs. Livius, of Bedford, formerly Miss Barham,* and intimate with Newton, Cowper, and Lady Austen, I learn that, though the vivacity and manner of Lady Austen weakened the belief of the depth of her personal religion, yet Mrs. Livius never entertained any doubt of its reality. Her own deep personal piety during a long life, and her just discrimination of character, are sufficient to give weight and authority to her judgment.

I take this opportunity of expressing her conviction that the loss of Lady Austen's society was a great privation to Cowper: that she both enlivened his spirits and stimulated his genius, and that the jealousy of Mrs. Unwin operated injuriously by compelling him to relinquish so innocent a source of gratification. Hayley, in some lines written on the occasion of her death, speaks of her as one who

Wak'd in a poet inspiration's flame;
Sent the freed eagle in the sun to bask,
And from the mind of Cowper—call'd "The Task."

Of the Rev. Walter Bagot, who departed in the year 1806, aged seventy-five, the poet always spoke in the language of unfeigned esteem and affection.

Sir George Throckmorton's death has been

* Sister of the late Joseph Foster Barham, Esq. I cannot mention this endeared character, with whom I have the privilege of being so nearly connected, without recording my affectionate regard, and high estimation of her piety and virtues.

already recorded, and with this event the genius of the place may be said to have deserted its hallowed retreats, for the mansion exists no longer. His surviving estimable widow, the Catharina of Cowper, resides at Northampton.

Lady Hesketh, whose affectionate kindness to the poet must have endeared her to every reader, died in the year 1807, aged seventy-four.

To the Editor's brother-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Johnson, several testimonies have already been borne in the course of this work. He was cousin to the poet, by one remove, which was the reason why he was usually designated as Cowper's *kinsman*, his mother having been the daughter of the Rev. Roger Donne, rector of Catfield, Norfolk, own brother to Cowper's mother. His unremitting and watchful care over the poet, for several successive years, and during a period marked by a painful and protracted malady, his generous sacrifice of his time, and of every personal consideration, that he might administer to the peace and comfort of his afflicted friend—his affectionate sympathy, and uniform forgetfulness of self, in all the various relations of life—these virtues have justly claimed for Dr. Johnson the esteem and love of his friends, and the honorable distinction of being ever identified with the endeared name of Cowper. He was rector of the united parishes of Yaxham and Welborne, in the county of Norfolk, where he preached the doctrines of the Gospel with fidelity, and adorned them by the Christian tenor of his life and conduct. He married Miss Livius, daughter of the late George Livius, Esq., formerly at the head of the commissariat, in India, during the government of Warren Hastings. The Editor was connected with him by marrying the sister of Mrs. Johnson. He departed in the autumn of the year 1833, after a short illness, and was followed to the grave by a crowded assemblage of his parishioners, to whom he was endeared by his virtues. He left his estimable widow and four surviving children to lament his loss. Cowper was engraved on his heart, and his Poems minutely impressed on his memory. Both, therefore, became a frequent theme of conversation; and it is to these sources of information, that the writer is indebted for the knowledge of many facts and incidents that are incorporated in the present edition.

The value which Cowper attached to the esteem of the Rev. W. Bull, the friend and travelling companion of John Thornton, Esq., may be seen in the following letter. It alludes to the approbation expressed by Mr. Bull on the publication of his first volume of poems.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

March 24, 1782.

Your letter gave me great pleasure, both as a testimony of your approbation and of your regard. I wrote in hopes of pleasing you, and such as you; and though I must confess that, at the same time, I cast a side-long glance at the good liking of the world at large, I believe I can say it was more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children; if we give them physic, we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey—if my book is so far honored as to be made the vehicle of true knowledge to any that are ignorant, I shall rejoice, and do already rejoice that it has procured me a proof of your esteem.

Yours, most truly, W. C.

Mr. Bull was distinguished by no common powers of mind, brilliant wit, and imagination. It was at his suggestion that Cowper engaged in translating the poems of Madame Guion. He died, as he lived, in the hopes and consolations of the Gospel, and left a son, the Rev. Thomas Bull, who inherits his father's virtues.

Wherever men have acquired celebrity by those powers of genius with which Providence has seen fit to discriminate them, a curiosity prevails to learn all the minuter traits of person, habit, and real character. We wish to realize the portrait before our eyes, to see how far all the component parts are in harmony with each other; or whether the elevation of mind which raises them beyond the general standard is perceptible in the occurrences of common life. Tell me, said an inquirer, writing from America, what was the figure of Cowper, what the character of his countenance, the expression of his eye, his manner, his habits, the house he lived in, whether its aspect was north or south, &c. This is amusing, but it shows the power of sympathy with which we are drawn to whatever commands our admiration, and excites the emotions of esteem and love.

The person and mind of Cowper seem to have been formed with equal kindness by nature; and it may be questioned if she ever bestowed on any man, with a fonder prodigality, all the requisites to conciliate affection and to inspire respect.

He is said to have been handsome in his youth. His features strongly expressed the powers of his mind and all the sensibility of his heart; and even in his declining years, time seemed to have spared much of its ravages, though his mind was harassed by unceasing nervous excitement.

He was of a middle stature, rather strong than delicate in the form of his limbs; the color of his hair was a light brown, that of his eyes a bluish grey, and his complexion ruddy. In his dress he was neat, but not finical; in his diet temperate, and not dainty.

He had an air of pensive reserve in his deportment, and his extreme shyness sometimes produced in his manners an indescribable mixture of awkwardness and dignity; but no person could be more truly graceful, when he was in perfect health, and perfectly pleased with his society. Towards women, in particular, his behavior and conversation were delicate and fascinating in the highest degree.

There was a simplicity of manner and character in Cowper which always charms, and is often the attribute of real genius. He was singularly calculated to excite emotions of esteem and love by those qualities that win confidence and inspire sympathy. In friendship he was uniformly faithful; and, if the events of life had not disappointed his fondest hopes, no man would have been more eminently adapted for the endearments of domestic life.

His daily habits of study and exercise are so minutely and agreeably delineated in his letters, that they present a perfect portrait of his domestic character.

His voice conspired with his features to announce to all who saw and heard him the extreme sensibility of his heart; and in reading aloud he furnished the chief delight of those social, enchanting winter evenings, which he has described so happily in the fourth book of "The Task."

Secluded from the world as he had long been, he yet retained in advanced life singular talents for conversation; and his remarks were uniformly distinguished by mild and benevolent pleasantry, by a strain of delicate humor, varied by solid and serious good sense, and those united charms of a cultivated mind, which he has himself very happily described in drawing the character of a venerable friend:

Grave without dullness, learned without pride.
Exact, yet not precise: though meek, keen-eyed;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit, as bright as ready, to produce;
Could fetch from records of an earlier age.
Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains, it was a privilege to hear.
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme:
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he lov'd so well.

But the traits of his character are nowhere developed with happier effect than in his own writings, and especially in his poems. From these we shall make a few extracts, and suffer him to draw the portrait for himself.

His admiration of the works of Nature:

I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free,
My very dreams were rural; rural too
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their pow'rs.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tun'd
To Nature's praises. *Task*, book iv.

The love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
This obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works, [form'd
And all can taste them: minds that have been
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmov'd.
It is a flame that dies not even there
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city-life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame.
Book iv.

God seen, and adored, in the works of Nature:

Not a flow'r
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odors, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Book vi.

His fondness for retirement:

Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wand'rers, gone astray,
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams.
Book iii.

His love for his country:

England, with all thy faults I love thee still—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left,

Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Tho' thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
Book ii.

His humane and generous feelings:

I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,
And catechise it well; apply thy glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own.
Book iii.

His love of liberty:

Oh Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
The poet's muse, his passion and his theme;
Genius is thine, and thou art fancy's nurse;
Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires:
Place me where winter breathes his keenest air,
And I will sing, if liberty be there;
And I will sing at liberty's dear feet,
In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.
Table Talk.

'Tis liberty alone, that gives the flow'r
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it.
Task, book v.

His depressive malady, and the source of its cure:

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One, who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.*
With gentle force soliciting the darts [live.
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me
Book iii.

The employment of his time, and design of his life and writings:

Me therefore studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,
Not waste it, and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account,
From whom are all our blessings; business finds
Even here: while sedulous I seek t' improve,
At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd
The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By causes not to be divulg'd in vain,
To its just point—*the service of mankind.*
Book iii.

* The Saviour.

But all is in his hand, whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm his ear whose eye is on the heart
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation prosper—even mine.
Book vi.

The office of doing justice to the poetical genius of Cowper has been assigned to an individual so well qualified to execute it with taste and ability, that the Editor begs thus publicly to record his acknowledgments and his unmingled satisfaction. The bowers of the muses are not unknown to the Rev. John Cunningham, and, in contemplating the poetical labors of others, he might, with a small variation, justly apply to himself the well-known exclamation, "Ed anch'io son pittore."*

All, therefore, that seems necessary, is simply to illustrate the beauties of Cowper's poetry in the same manner as we have exhibited his personal character. We shall present a brief series of poetical portraits.

The following portrait of Lord Chatham is drawn with great force and spirit:

In him Demosthenes was heard again;
And freedom taught him her Athenian strain.
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose:
And every venal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke.
Table Talk.

Sir Joshua Reynolds:

There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features.

Bacon the sculptor:

Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.†

John Thornton, Esq.:

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands
A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for his paternal call,
Who make some rich for the supply of all;

* Attributed to Correggio, after contemplating the works of Raphael.

† Alluding to the monument of Lord Chatham, in Westminster Abbey.

God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ,
And Thornton is familiar with the joy.
Charity.

The martyrs of the Reformation:

Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown,
Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chas'd them up to heav'n. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious suff'rers little praise.
Task, book v.

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress:

O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleas'd remember, and, while mem'ry yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose hum'rous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
Witty, and well-employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his slighted word:
I name thee not, lest so despis'd a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame:
Yet, e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober grey,
Revere the man, whose Pilgrim marks the road,
And guides the Progress of the soul to God.
Tirocinium.

Brown, the rural designer:*

Lo! he comes—
Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, appears.
Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode
Of our forefathers, a grave whisker'd race
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where more expos'd
It may enjoy th' advantage of the north,
And agueish east, till time shall have transform'd
Those naked acres to a shelt'ring grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murm'ring soft, now roaring in cascades,
E'en as he bids. Th' enraptur'd owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd. And yet, finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
The Task, book iii.

London:

Oh! thou resort and mart of all the earth,
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
Much that I love and much that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleases and yet shocks me, I can laugh,
And I can weep, can hope, and yet despond,
Feel wrath and pity when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have sav'd a city once,
And thou hast many righteous. Well for thee—
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abram plead in vain.

THE CONTRAST.

Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied,
As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.
Book i.

The gin-palace:

Behold the schools, in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts,
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill. 'Tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace,
To indigence, and rapine, till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little; vain th' attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
Th' excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot, and ten thousand casks,
Forever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriously drunk, obey th' important call!
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Task, book iv.

We add a few short passages:

How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.

Not to understand a treasure's worth
Till time has stolen away the slighted good
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.

Not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep.

When one that holds communion with the skies
Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.

* Brown, in Cowper's time, was the great designer in the art of laying out grounds for the nobility and gentry.

We must not omit a most splendid specimen of Cowper's poetic genius, entitled the "Yardley Oak." It is an unfinished poem, and supposed to have been written in the year 1791, and laid aside, without ever having been resumed, when his attention was engrossed with the edition of Milton. Whatever may be the history of this admirable fragment, it has justly acquired for Cowper the reputation of having produced one of the richest and most highly finished pieces of versification that ever flowed from the pen of a poet. Its existence even was unknown both to Dr. Johnson and Hayley, till the latter discovered it buried in a mass of papers. We subjoin in a note a letter addressed by Dr. Johnson to Hayley, containing further particulars.*

Though this fragment is inserted among the poems, we extract the following passages, as expressive of the vigor and inspiration of true poetic genius.

Thou wast a bauble once, a cup and ball
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.
But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepar'd
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.
So Fancy dreams.

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;
And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in! Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign: and the numerous flocks,
That graz'd it, stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe-sheltered from the storm.

No flock frequents thee now.
While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd
Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;
Then twig; then sapling; and as cent'ry roll'd
Slow after century, a giant bulk
Of girth enormous with moss-cushion'd root
Upheav'd above the soil, and sides emboss'd
With prominent wens globose—till at the last,
The rottenness which time is charg'd to inflict
On other mighty ones, found also thee.

Time was when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
When tempests could not.*

With these acknowledged claims to popular favor, it is pleasing to reflect on the singular moderation of Cowper amidst the snares of literary fame. His motives seem to have been pure and simple, and his main design to elevate the character of the age, and to glorify God. He was not insensible to the value of applause, when conferred by a liberal and powerful mind, but even in this instance it was a subdued and chastened feeling. A more pleasing evidence could not be adduced than when Hayley, in one of his visits to Weston, brought a recent newspaper containing a speech of Mr. Fox, in which that distinguished orator had quoted the following impressive verses on the Bastille, in the House of Commons.

Ye horrid tow'rs, the abode of broken hearts:
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music, such as suits their sov'reign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap,
To hear that ye were fall'n at last; to know,
That e'en our enemies, so oft employ'd
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.†

Mrs. Unwin discovered marks of vivid satisfaction, Cowper smiled, and was silent.‡

* "January 6, 1804.

"Among our dear Cowper's papers, I found the following memorandum:

YARDLEY OAK IN GIRTH, FEET 22, INCHES 6½.
THE OAK AT YARDLEY LODGE, FEET 28, INCHES 5.

As to Yardley Oak, it stands in Yardley Chase, where the Earls of Northampton have a fine seat. It was a favorite walk of our dear Cowper, and he once carried me to see that oak. I believe it is five miles at least from Weston Lodge. It is indeed a noble tree, perfectly sound, and stands in an open part of the Chase, with only one or two others near it, so as to be seen to advantage.

"With respect to the oak at Yardley Lodge, that is quite in decay—a pollard, and almost hollow. I took an excrescence from it in the year 1791, and if I mistake not, Cowper told me it is said to have been an oak in the time of the Conqueror. This latter oak is on the road to the former, but not above half so far from Weston Lodge, being only just beyond Killick and Dingledeny. This is all I can tell you about the oaks. They were old acquaintances, and great favorites of the bard. How rejoiced I am to hear that he has immortalized one of them in blank verse! Where could those one hundred and sixty-one lines lie hid? Till this very day I never heard of their existence, nor suspected it."

* The late Samuel Whitbread, Esq., was an enthusiastic admirer of the poetry of Cowper, and solicitous to obtain a relic of the Yardley Oak. Mr Bull, of Newport Pagnel, promised to send a specimen, but some little delay having occurred, Mr. Whitbread addressed to him the following verses, which, emanating from such a man, and not having met the public eye, will, we are persuaded, be considered as a literary curiosity, and of no mean merit.

"Send me the precious bit of oak,
Which your own hand so fondly took
From off the consecrated tree,
A relic dear to you and me.
To many 'twould a bauble prove
Nor worth the keeping.—Those who love
The teeming grand poetic mind,
Which God thought fit in chains to bind,
Of dreadful, dark despairing gloom;
Yet left within such ample room,
For coruscations strong and bright:
Such beams of everlasting light,
As make men envy, love, and dread,
The structure of that wondrous head,
Must prize a bit of Judith's stem,
That brought to light that precious gem—
The fragment: which in verse sublime
Records her honors to all time."

† These lines were written prophetically, and previously to the event.

‡ The late Lord Erskine was a frequent reciter of pas-

We have mentioned how little Cowper was elated by praise. We shall now state how much he was depressed by unjust censure. His first volume of poems had been severely criticised by the Analytical Review. His feelings are recorded in the following (hitherto unpublished) letter to John Thornton, Esq.

Olney, May 21, 1782.

Dear Sir,—You have my sincere thanks for your obliging communication, both of my book to Dr. Franklin, and of his opinion of it to me. Some of the periodical critics, I understand have spoken of it with contempt enough; but, while gentlemen of taste and candor have more favorable thoughts of it, I see reason to be less concerned than I have been about their judgment, hastily framed perhaps, and certainly not without prejudice against the subjects of which it treats.

Your friendly intimation of the Doctor's sentiments reached me very seasonably, just when, in a fit of despondence, to which no man is naturally more inclined, I had begun to regret the publication of it, and had consequently resolved to write no more. For if a man has the fortune to please none but his friends and their connexions, he has reason enough to conclude that he is indebted for the measure of success he meets with, not to the real value of his book, but to the partiality of the few that approve it. But I now feel myself differently affected towards my favorite employment; for which sudden change in my sentiments I may thank you and your correspondent in France, his entire unacquaintedness with me, a man whom he never saw, nor will see, his character as a man of sense and condition, and his acknowledged merit as an ingenious and elegant writer, and especially his having arrived at an age when men are not to be pleased they know not why, are so many circumstances that give a value to his commendations, and make them the most flattering a poor poet could receive, quite out of conceit with himself, and quite out of heart with his occupations.

If you think it worth your while, when you write next to the Doctor, to inform him how much he has encouraged me by his approbation, and to add my respects to him, you will oblige me still further; for next to the pleasure it would afford me to hear that it has been useful to any, I cannot have a greater, so far as my volume is in question, than to hear it has pleased the judicious.

Mrs. Unwin desires me to add her respectful compliments.

I am, dear sir,
Your affectionate and most obedient servant,
W. C.

To John Thornton, Esq.
Clapham, Surrey.

Through this harsh and unwarrantable exercise of criticism, the world might never have possessed the immortal poem of "The Task," if an American Philosopher had not awarded that honorable meed of just praise and commendation, which an English critic thought proper to withhold.

But it is not merely the poetic claims of Cowper which have earned for him so just a title to public gratitude and praise. It would be unjust not to bestow particular notice on a talent, in which he singularly excelled, and one that friendship ought especially to honor, as she is indebted to it for a considerable portion of her happiest sources of delight—we mean the talent of writing letters.

Those of Pope are generally considered to be too labored, and deficient in ease. Swift is frequently ill-natured and offensive. Gray is admirable, but not equal to Cowper either in the graces of simplicity, or in the warmth of affection.

The letters of Cowper are not distinguished by any remarkable superiority of thought or diction: it is rather the easy and graceful flow of sentiment and feeling, his enthusiastic love of nature, his touching representations of common and domestic life, and above all, the ingenuous disclosure of the recesses of his own heart, that constitute their charm and excellence. They form a kind of biographical sketch, drawn by his own hand. His poetry proclaims the author, his correspondence depicts the man. We see him in his walks, in the privacy of his study, in his daily occupations, amid the endearments of home, and with all the qualities that inspire friendship, and awaken confidence and love. We learn what he thought, what he said, his views of men and manners, his personal habits and history. His ideas usually flow without premeditation. All is natural and

sages from Cowper's poems. The Editor is indebted to E. H. Barker, Esq., of Thetford, for the following anecdote which was communicated to him by Joseph Jekyll, Esq., the eminent counsellor.

Mr. Jekyll was dining with Lord Oxford, and among the company were Dr. Parr, Horne Tooke, Lord Erskine, and Mr. W. Scott (brother to Lady Oxford). Lord Erskine recited, in his admirable manner, the verses of Cowper about the *Captive*, without saying whose they were; Dr. Parr expressed great admiration of the verses, and said that he had never heard of them or seen them before; he inquired whose they were? H. Tooke said, "Why, Cowper's." Dr. Parr said he had never read Cowper's poems. "Not read Cowper's poems?" said Horne Tooke, "and you never will, I suppose, Dr. Parr, till they are turned into Greek?" When the company went into the drawing-room, Lady Oxford presented Dr. Parr with a small edition of Cowper's Poems, and Mr. Jekyll was desired by her ladyship to write in the book, "From the Countess of Oxford to Dr. Parr." Horne Tooke wrote also underneath, "Who never read the book," and signed his name to it; all present signed their names and added some remark, and among the rest W. Scott. At the sale of Dr. Parr's books, this volume fetched about five pounds, being considered valuable and curious, as the W. Scott signed was supposed to have been *Sir* W. Scott (since Lord Stowell). Lord Stowell afterwards took great pains to contradict the report.

easy. There is no display, no evidence of conscious superiority, no concealment of his real sentiments. He writes as he feels and thinks, and with such an air of truth and frankness, that he seems to stamp upon the letter the image of his mind, with the same fidelity of resemblance that the canvass represents his external form and features. We see in them the sterling good sense of a man, the playfulness and simplicity of a child, and the winning softness and delicacy of a woman's feelings. He can write upon any subject, or write without one. He can embellish what is real by the graces of his imagination, or invest what is imaginary with the semblance of reality. He can smile or he can weep, philosophize or trifle, descant with fervor on the loveliness of nature, talk about his tame hares, or cast the overflowings of an affectionate heart at the shrine of friendship. His correspondence is a wreath of many flowers. His letters will always be read with delight and interest, and by many, perhaps, will be considered to be the rivals of his poems. They are justly entitled to the eulogium which we know to have been pronounced upon them by Charles Fox,—that of being "the best specimens of epistolary excellence in the English language."

Among men distinguished by classical taste and acquirements, his Latin poems will ever be considered as elegant specimens of composition, and formed after the best models of antiquity.

There is one exquisite little gem, in Latin haxameters, entitled "Votum," beginning thus:

O matutini rores, auræque salubres,

which we believe has never received an English dress. A gentleman of literary taste has kindly furnished us with a pleasing version, which we are happy to subjoin in a note.* We trust the author will excuse the insertion of his name.

We have thus endeavored to exhibit the singular versatility of Cowper's genius, and the combination of powers not often united in the same mind. All that now remains is to consider the consecration of these faculties to high and holy ends; and the influence of his writings on the literary, the moral, and religious character of his age.

The great end and aim which he proposed to himself as an author has already been illustrated from his writings; we add one more passage to show the sanctity of his character.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine.
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart.
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good.
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was—dependence upon thee:
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.
Truth.

We confess that we are edified by this simple, yet sublime and holy piety.

It was from this source that Cowper drew the materials that have given to his writings the character of so elevated a morality. Too seldom, alas! have poets consecrated their powers to the cause of divine truth. In modern times, especially, we have witnessed a voluptuous imagery and appeal to the passions, in some highly-gifted writers, which have contributed to undermine public morality, and to tarnish the purity of female minds. But it is the honorable distinction of Cowper's poetry, that nothing is to be found to excite a blush on the cheek of modesty, nor a single line that requires to be blotted out. He has done much to introduce a purer and more exalted taste; he is the poet of nature, the poet of the heart and conscience, and, what is a still higher praise, the poet of Christianity. He mingled the waters of Helicon with the hallowed streams of Siloam, and planted the cross amid the bowers of the muses. Johnson, indeed, has remarked, that religion is not susceptible of poetry.* If this

* THE WISH.

"Ye verdant hills, ye soft umbrageous vales,
Fann'd by light Zephyr's health-inspiring gales;
Ye woods, whose boughs in rich luxuriance wave;
Ye sparkling rivulets, whose waters lave
Those meads, where erst, at morning's dewy prime,
(Reckless of shoals beneath the stream of Time,)
My vagrant feet your flowery margin press'd,
Whilst Heaven gave back the sunshine in my breast;—
O, would the powers that rule my wayward lot
Restore me to the lone paternal cot!
There, far from folly, fraud's ensnaring wiles,
The world's dark frown, or still more dangerous smiles,
Let peaceful duties peaceful hours engage;
Till, winding gently down the slope of age,
Tranquil I mark life's swift declining day
Fling deeper shades athwart my lessening way
And pleased, at last put off this mortal coil,
Again to mingle with it kindred soil
Beneath the grassy turf, or silent stone;
Unseen the path I trod, my resting-place unknown."
T. Ostler.

* The reasons which he assigns, in justification of this opinion, are thus specified.

"Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of the spring, and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide, and the revolutions of the sky, and praise the Maker for his works, in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God.

"Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits

be true, it can arise only from the want of religious authors and religious readers. But we venture to deny the position, and to maintain that religion ennobles whatever it touches. In architecture, what building ever rivalled the magnificence of the temple of Jerusalem, St. Peter's in Rome, or the imposing grandeur of St. Paul's? In painting, what power of art can surpass the Transfiguration of a Raphael, the Ecce Homo of a Guido, or the Elevation and Descent of the Cross in a Rubens? In poetry, where shall we find a nobler production of human genius than the Paradise Lost? Again, let us listen to the language of the pious Fénélon:

"No Greek or Latin poetry is comparable to the Psalms. That which begins, 'The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken, and hath called up the earth,' exceeds whatever human imagination has produced. Neither Homer, nor any other poet, equals Isaiah, in describing the majesty of God, in whose presence empires are as a grain of sand, and the whole universe as a tent, which to-day is set up, and removed to-morrow. Sometimes, as when he paints the charms of peace, Isaiah has the softness and sweetness of an eclogue; at others, he soars above mortal conception. But what is there in profane antiquity comparable to the wailings of Jeremiah, when he mourns over the calamities of his people? or to Nahum, when he foresees in spirit the downfall of Nineveh, under the assault of an innumerable army? We almost behold the formidable host, and hear the arms and the chariots. Read Daniel, denouncing to Belshazzar the vengeance of God, ready to fall upon him; compare it with the most sublime passages of pagan antiquity; you find nothing comparable to it. It must be added that, in the Scriptures, everything sustains itself; whether we consider the historical, the legal, or the poetical part of it, the proper character appears in all."

It would be singular, if a subject which unveils to the eye of faith the glories of the invisible world, and which is to be a theme of gratitude and praise throughout eternity, could inspire no ardor in a poet's soul; and if the wings of imagination could take flight to every world save to that which is eternal. We leave our Montgomeries to refute so gross an error, and appeal with confidence to the page of Cowper.

We quote the following passage, to show that religion can not only supply the noblest theme, but also communicate a corresponding sublimity of thought and language. It is the glowing and poetical description of the millennial period, commencing with—

Sweet is the harp of prophecy.

We have room only for the concluding portion:—

One song employs all nations, and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;
See Salem built, the labor of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the farthest west;
And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand,
And worships. Her report has travell'd forth

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of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

"The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but, few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

"Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than the things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel the imagination. But Religion must be shown as it is: suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already.

"From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

"The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt, rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

"Of sentiments purely religious it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that pious verse can do is to help the memory and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere."—See Life of Waller.

These remarks seem to be founded on very erroneous principles; but having already offered our sentiments, we forbear any further comment, except to state that we profess to belong to the school of Cowper; that we participate in the expression of his regret,

"Pity that Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!"

and that we cordially share in his conviction,

"The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to stray,
And every Muse attend her on her way."

Table Talk.

Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Sion! An assembly such as Earth
Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.
Task, book vi.

By this devotional strain of poetry, so adapted to the spirit of the present age, Cowper is rapidly accomplishing a revolution in the public taste, and creating a new race of readers. He is purifying the literary atmosphere from its noxious vapors. The muse has too long taken her flight *downwards;* Cowper leads her to hold communion with the skies. He has taught us that literary celebrity, acquired at the cost of public morals, is but an inglorious triumph, and merits no better title than that of splendid infamy. His page has fully proved that the varied field of nature, the scenes of domestic life, and the rich domain of moral and religious truth, are sufficiently ample for the exercise of poetic taste and fancy; while they never fail to tranquillize the mind, to invigorate the principles, and to enlarge the bounds of virtuous pleasure.

The writings of Cowper have also been highly beneficial to the church of England. If he has been a severe, he has also been a faithful monitor. We allude to such passages as the following—

There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect! [were!
Are all such teachers? Would to heaven all
Task, book ii.

I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
But, loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme—
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On skulls that cannot teach and will not learn.

There was a period when the chase was not considered to be incompatible with the functions of the sacred office. On this subject Cowper exclaims, with just and indignant feeling—

Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
Send your dishonor'd gown to Monmouth-street!
The sacred function in your hands is made—
Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade!
The Progress of Error.

The danger of popular applause:

O popular applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in the gentlest gales;
But, swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!
With all his canvas set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Ah, spare your idol! think him human still.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

These rebukes, pungent as they are, were needed. The works of Mrs. Hannah More bear unquestionable testimony to this fact. But we may now record with gratitude a very perceptible change, and appeal to the evidences of reviving piety among all classes of the clergy.

Though the singular and mysterious malady of Cowper has been the occasion of repeated remark, yet we cannot dismiss the subject without a few concluding reflections.

In contrasting with his other letters the correspondence with Newton, the chosen depositary of all his secret woe, it is difficult to recognise in the writer the same identity of character. His mind appears to have undergone some transforming process, and the gay and lively tints of his sportive imagination to be suddenly shrouded in the gloom of a mysterious and appalling darkness. We seem to enter into the regions of sorrow and despair, and to trace the terrific inscription so finely drawn by the poet, in his celebrated "Inferno;"

"Voi ch' entrate lasciate ogni speranza."*

Ye who enter here leave all hope behind.

In contemplating this afflicting dispensation, and referring every event, as we must, to the appointment or permissive providence of God, we feel constrained to exclaim with the patriarch, "*The thunder of his power who can understand!*"† But life, as Bishop Hall observes, is made up of perturbations; and those seem most subject to their occurrence who are distinguished by the gifts of rank, fortune, or genius. Such is the discipline which the moral Governor of the world sees fit to employ for the purification of their possessors! In recording the lot of genius, Milton, it is known, was blind, Pope was afflicted with sickness, and Tasso, Swift, Smart, and Collins, were exposed to the aberrations of reason. "Moralists," says Dr. Johnson, "talk of the uncertainty of fortune, and of

* See the "Inferno" of Dante, where this motto is inscribed over the entrance into the abodes of woe.
† Job xxvi. 14.

the transitoriness of beauty; but it is yet more dreadful to consider that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change—that understanding may make its appearance and depart, that it may blaze and expire." It seems as if the mind were too ethereal to be confined within the bounds of its earthly prison, or that the too frequent and intense exercise of thought disturbs the digestive organs, and lays the foundation of hypochondrical feelings, which cloud the serenity of the soul. It is painful to reflect how much our sensations of comfort and happiness depend on the even flow and circulation of the blood. But the connexion of physical and moral causes has been the subject of philosophical remark in all ages. The somewhat analogous case of the celebrated Dr. Johnson seems to have been overlooked by the preceding biographers of Cowper. "The morbid melancholy," observes Boswell, "which was lurking in his constitution, and to which we may ascribe those peculiarities, and that aversion to regular life, which, at a very early period, marked his character, gathered such strength in his twentieth year, as to afflict him in a dreadful manner. While he was at Lichfield, in the college vacation, in 1729, he felt himself overwhelmed with a horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery. From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labors, and all his enjoyments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence."

Let those to whom Providence has assigned a humbler path, learn the duty of contentment, and be thankful that if they are denied the honors attendant on rank and genius, they are at least exempted from its trials. For where there are *heights*, there are *depths*; and he who occupies the summit is often seen descending into the valley of humiliation.

That a similar morbid temperament may be traced in the case of Cowper is indisputable; nor can a more conclusive evidence be adduced than the words of his own memoir:—"I was struck, not long after my settlement in the Temple, with such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair."* In his subsequent attack, religion became an adjunct, not a cause, for he describes himself at that period as having lived without religion. The impression under which he labored was therefore manifestly not suggested by a theological creed, but was the delusion of a distempered fancy. Every other view is founded on misconception, and must inevitably tend to mislead the public.

* See page 469.

Before we conclude the life of Cowper, there are some important reflections, arising from his unhappy malady, which we beg to impress on the attention of the reader.

The fruitful source of all his misery was the indulgence of an over-excited state of feeling. His mind was never quiescent. Occurrences, which an ordinary degree of self-possession would have met with calmness, or passive indifference, were to him the subject of mental agony and distress. His imagination gave magnitude to trifles, till what was at first ideal, at length assumed the character of a terrible reality. He was always anticipating evil; and so powerful is the influence of fancy, that what we dread, we seldom fail to realize. Thus Swift lived in the constant fear of mental imbecility, and at length incurred the calamity. We scarcely know a spectacle more pitiable, and yet more reprehensible. For what is the use of reason, if we reject its dictates? or the promise of the Spirit to help our infirmities, if we nevertheless yield to their sway? How important in the education of youth to repress the first symptoms of nervous irritability, to invigorate the principles, and to train the mind to habits of self-discipline, and firm reliance upon God! The far greater proportion of human trials originate not in the appointment of Providence, but may be traced to the want of a well-ordered and duly regulated mind; to the ascendency of passion, and to the absence of mental and moral energy. It is possible to indulge in a state of mind that shall rob every blessing of half its enjoyment, and give to every trial a double portion of bitterness.

We turn with delight to a more edifying feature in his character—

His submission under this dark dispensation.

It is easy to exhibit the triumphs of faith in moments of exultation and joy; but the vivid energy of true faith is never more powerfully exemplified, than when it is left to its own naked exercise, unaided by the influence of exciting causes. It is amid the desolation of hope, and when the iron enters into the soul—it is amid pain, depression, and sorrow, when the eye is suffused with tears and every nerve vibrates with emotion—to be able to exclaim at such a moment, "Here I am, let him do with me as seemeth him good;"* this is indeed the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit, which none but God can give, and which will finally lead to a triumphant crown.

That the mind should still indulge its sorrows, in moments of awakened feeling, is natural. On this subject we know nothing more touching than the manner in which Cowper parodies and appropriates to himself

* Letter to Newton, May 20, 1786.

Milton's affecting lamentation over his own blindness:*

Seasons return, but not to me returns
God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
Or joy, or hope, or Jesus' face divine;
But cloud, &c.

To this quotation we might add the affecting conclusion of the poem of "The Castaway."

We perish'd each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.†

The overruling Providence of God is no less discernible in this event.

The severest trials are not without their alleviation, nor the accompaniment of some gracious purpose. Had it not been for Cowper's visitation, the world might never have been presented with The Task, nor the Church of Christ been edified with the Olney Hymns. He was constrained to write, in order to divert his melancholy. "Despair," he observes, "made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement."‡ "In such a situation of mind, encompassed by the midnight of absolute despair, and a thousand times filled with unspeakable horror, I first commenced an author. Distress drove me to it; and the impossibility of subsisting without some employment, still recommends it."§ How wonderful are the ways of God, and what a powerful commentary on Cowper's own celebrated hymn—

God moves in a mysterious way, &c.

It will probably be found, at the last great day, that the darkest dispensations were the most essential links in the chain of providential dealings; and that what we least understood, and often contemplated with solemn awe on earth, will form the subject of never-ceasing praise in eternity.

Whatever were the trials of Cowper, they are now terminated.

It will be remembered that his kinsman saw, or thought he saw, in the features of his deceased friend, "an expression of calmness and composure, mingled, as it were, with holy surprise."‖ We would not attach too much importance to a look, but rather rest our hopes of Cowper's happiness on the covenanted mercy and faithfulness of God. Still the supposition is natural and soothing; and we by no means think it improbable that the disembodied spirit might communicate to the earthly lineaments, in the moment of departure, the impression of its own heavenly joy. And O! what must have been the expression of that surprise and joy, when, as his immortal spirit ascended to him that gave it, instead of beholding the averted eye of an offended God, he recognized the radiant smiles of his reconciled countenance, and the caresses of his tenderness and love—when all heaven burst upon his astonished view; and when, amid angels, and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, he was invited to bear his part in the glorious song of the redeemed, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests forever and ever.*

But it is time to close our remarks on the Life and Writings of Cowper. It is a name that has long entwined itself around the affections of our heart, and appealed, from early days, both to conscience and feeling. We lament our inadequacy to fulfil all the duties of the present important undertaking, but the motives which have powerfully urged us to engaged in it are founded on a wish to exhibit Cowper in accordance with his own Christian character and principles; to vindicate him from prevailing misconceptions; and in imputing the gloom of depression, under which he labored, to its true causes, so to treat this delicate subject as to make it the occasion of sympathizing interest, and not of revolting and agonized feelings. The private correspondence, in this respect, is invaluable, and absolutely essential to the clear elucidation of his case. Other documents have also been inserted that never appeared in any previous biography of Cowper; and private sources of information have been explored, not easily accessible to other inquirers. We trust this object has been attained, and the hope of so important a result is a source of cheering consolation. The history of Cowper is fruitful in the pathetic, the sublime, and the terrible, so as to produce an effect that seems almost to realize the fictions of romance. A life composed of such materials cannot fail to command attention. It possesses all the bolder lineaments of character, relieved by the familiar, the tender, the sportive, and the gay. Emotions are thus excited in which the heart loves to indulge; for who does not delight alternately in the calmness of repose, and in the excitement of awakened feeling?

But, independently of the interest created by the events of Cowper's life, there is something singularly impressive in the mechanism of his mind. It is so curiously wrought, and wonderfully made, as to form a subject for contemplation to the philosopher, the Christian, and the medical observer. The union of these several qualifications seems necessary to analyze the interior springs of thought and action, to mark the character of God's

* Paradise Lost, book iii.
† See p. 464.
‡ Letter to Newton, Aug. 6, 1785.
§ Letter to Newton, May 20, 1786.
‖ See page 465.

providential dealings, and to trace the influence of morbid temperament on the powers of the intellect and the passions of the soul. His mind presents the most wonderful combinations of the grave and the gay, the social and the retired, ministering to the spiritual joy of others, yet enveloped in the gloom of darkness, enchained with fetters, yet vigorous and free, soaring to the heights of Zion, yet precipitated to the depths below. It resembles a beautiful landscape, overshadowed by a dark and impending cloud. Every moment we expect the cloud to burst on the head of the devoted sufferer; and the awful anticipation would be fulfilled, were it not that a divine hand, which guides every event, and without which not even a sparrow falls to the ground, interposes and arrests the shock. Upwards of twenty years expired, during which he was thus graciously upheld. He then began to sink under his accumulated sorrows. But it is worthy of observation, that during this period his mind never suffered *a total alienation*. It was a partial eclipse, not night, nor yet day. He lived long enough, both for himself and others, sufficient to discharge all the claims of an affectionate friendship, and to raise to himself an imperishable name on the noble foundation of moral virtue. At length, when he stood alone, as it were, like a column in the melancholy waste; when he was his own world, and the solitary agent, around which clung the sensations of a heart always full, and the reflections of a mind unconscious of a pause—he died. But his last days and moments were soothed by the offices of Christian kindness and the most disinterested regard. His beloved kinsman never left him till he had closed his eyes in death, and till the disembodied spirit, at length, found the rest in heaven, which forever obliterated all its earthly sorrows.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever.—Rev. xxii. 3—5.

ON THE

GENIUS AND POETRY OF COWPER.

BY THE REV. J. W. CUNNINGHAM, A.M., VICAR OF HARROW.

In presenting to the public the first Complete Edition of the Works of Cowper, it is thought desirable to prefix to the Poems a short dissertation on his Genius and Poetry. It is true that criticisms abound which have nearly the same object. It is true also that some of these criticisms are of a very high order of excellence. But perhaps their very number and merit supply a reason for adding at least one to the catalogue. The observations of the different Reviewers are scattered over so large a number of volumes, and these volumes are, many of them, either of so expensive or so ephemeral a character, that an essay which endeavors to collect these criticisms into a focus, and present them at once to the eye of the reader, is far from superfluous. And the present critique pretends to little more than the accomplishment of this object. The writer is not ashamed to profit from the labor and genius of his predecessors in the same course, and to let them say for him, what he could not say so well for himself.

With this apology for what might otherwise be deemed a work of supererogation, we enter upon the proposed undertaking.

And here we must begin by observing that it is impossible not to be struck with certain peculiarities in the *history* of Cowper, as connected with his poetical productions. Although, as it has been truly said of him—"born a poet, if ever there was one,"—thinking and feeling upon all occasions as none but a poet could, expressing himself in verse with almost incredible facility, it does not appear that Cowper, between the ages of fourteen and thirty-three, produced anything beyond the most trifling specimens of his art. The only lines characteristic of his genius and peculiarities as a poet, and which, though composed at a distance of more than thirty years from the publication of "The Task," have so intimate a resemblance to it as to seem to be a page out of the same volume, are those written at the age of eighteen, on finding the heel of an old shoe.

"This ponderous heel of perforated hide,
Compact, with pegs indented, many a row,
Haply (for such its massy form bespeaks)
The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown
Upbore: on this supported, oft he stretched,
With uncouth strides, along the furrow'd glebe,
Flattening the stubborn clod; till cruel time,
(What will not cruel time?) or a wry step,
Sever'd the strict cohesion; when, alas!
He who could erst, with even, equal pace,
Pursue his destin'd way, with symmetry,
And some proportion form'd, now, on one side,
Curtail'd and maim'd, the sport of vagrant boys,
Cursing his frail supporter, treach'rous prop!
With toilsome steps, and difficult, moves on."

A few light and agreeable poems, two hymns written at Huntingdon, with about sixty others composed at Olney, are almost the only known poetical productions of his pen between the years 1749 and 1782, at which last period he committed his volume of poems in rhyme to the press. There are examples in the physical world, of mountains reposing in coldness and quietness for ages; and, at length, without any apparently new stimulus, awaking from their slumber, and deluging the surrounding vineyards with streams of fire. But it is, we believe, an unheard-of poetical phenomenon, for a mind teeming with such tendencies and capabilities as that of Cowper, to sleep through so long a period, and, at length, suddenly to awake, when illness and age might seem to have laid their palsying hand upon its energies, and at once to erect itself into poetical life and supremacy. In general, the poet either 'lisps in numbers,' or begins to put forth his hidden powers under the exciting influence of some new passion or emotion—such as love, fear, hope, or disappointment. But how wide of this was the history of Cowper! In his case, the muse had no infancy, but sprang full armed from the brain of the poet.

But, if the tardy development of the poetical powers of our author was one peculiarity in his case, the suddenness and completeness of the development, when it did take place, was, under his circumstances, a

still greater subject of surprise. In the account of his life we learn, that, after quitting Westminster school, at the age of eighteen, he spent three years in a solicitor's office; and passed from thence, at the age of twenty-one, into chambers in the Inner Temple. Soon after this event, he says of himself, "I was struck, not long after my settlement in the Temple, with such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, rising up in despair. I presently lost all relish for the studies to which before I had been closely attached. The classics had no longer any charm for me. I had need of something more salutary than amusement, but I had no one to direct me where to find it." This dejection of mind, as our readers are aware, led him onward from depth to depth of misery and despair, till at length he was borne away, helpless and hopeless, in the year 1768, to an asylum for insane patients at St. Albans. Released from the awful grasp of a perverted imagination, chiefly by the power of that religion, which, in spite of every fact in his history, has been, with malignant hatred to Christianity, charged as the cause of his madness, he spent the two happiest years of his life at Huntingdon. After this he retired with the Unwin family to Olney, in Buckinghamshire; and there, after passing through the most tremendous mental conflicts, sank again into a state of despondency; from which he at length awoke, (if it might be called awaking,) not indeed to be freed from his delusions, but, whilst under their dominion, to delight, instruct, and astonish mankind, with some of the most original and enchanting poems in any language. The philosophical work of Browne, dedicated to Queen Caroline, and composed, as the author says, by a man who had lost his "rational soul," has been always reputed the miracle of literature. But Browne's case is scarcely more remarkable than that of Cowper. That a work sparkling with the most childlike gayety and brilliant wit; exhibiting the most cheerful views of the character of God, the face of nature, and the circumstances of man, should proceed from a writer who at the time regarded God as an implacable enemy; the earth we live on as the mere porch to a world of punishment; and human life, at least in his own case, as the cloudy morning of a day of interminable anguish—all this is to be explained only by the fact that madness disdains all rules, and reconciles all contrarieties. His history supplies an example, not without its parallel, of a mind—like some weapon drawn from its sheath to fight a particular battle, and then suspended on the walls again—called forth to accomplish an important end, and then sent back again into obscurity. And it is no less an evidence, amongst a thousand other instances, that our heavenly Father "in judgment remembers mercy," and bestows this mitigation of the heaviest of all maladies, that those exposed to its deadliest influence and themselves denied all access to the bright sources of happiness, are sometimes privileged to pour the streams of consolation over the path of others. How truly may it be said of such persons, "*Sic vos, non vobis, mellificatis apes.*"

But whilst we speak of certain peculiarities in the case of Cowper, as calculated to destroy all reasonable expectation of such poems as he has given to the public, we are not sure that these very peculiarities have not assisted to supply his poetry with some of its characteristic and most valuable features. Among the qualities, for example, by which his compositions are distinguished, are those of strong sense—moderation on all the subjects most apt to throw the mind off its balance—maturity in thought, reasoning and imagination—fulness without inflation—the "strength of the oak without its nodosities" —the "inspiration of the Sybil without her contortions"—the most profound and extensive views of human nature. But perhaps every one of these qualities is oftener the growth of age than of youth: and is rather the tardy fruit of patient experience than the sudden shoot of untrained and undisciplined genius.

In like manner, the poetry of Cowper is characterized by the most touching tenderness, by the deepest sympathy with the sufferings of others, by a penetrating insight into the dark recesses of a tempted and troubled heart. But where are qualities such as these so likely to be cultivated as in the shady places of a suffering mind, and in the school of that stern mistress who teaches us "from our own to melt at others' woe," and to administer to others the medicines which have healed ourselves? A celebrated physician is said to have inoculated himself with the virus of the plague, in order to practise with more efficacy in the case of others. Such voluntary initiation in sorrow was needless in the case of Cowper;—another hand had opened the wound which was to familiarize him with the deepest trials of suffering humanity.

It is time, however, that we should proceed to consider some of the claims of Cowper to the character of a poet. Large multitudes have found an almost irresistible charm in his writings. In what peculiarities does this powerful influence mainly reside?

In order to reply to this question, we would first direct the attention of our readers to the constitution of his mind.

And here we may enter on our work by observing, that almost all critics have regarded

an *ardent love of nature* as a *sine qua non* in the constitution of a poet. And nature, surely, never had a more enthusiastic admirer than the author of the Task. How feelingly does he write on this subject!

"I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
E'er since, a truant boy, I pass'd my bounds,
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames."

When Homer describes his shepherd as contemplating the heavens and earth by the light of the moon and stars, and says, with his accustomed simplicity and grace,—"The heart of the shepherd is glad;" our author might seem to have sat for the portrait. Although unacquainted with nature in her sublimest aspect, every point in creation appears to have a charm for him. To no lips would the strain of another poet be more appropriate.

"I care not, fortune, what you me deny;
You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky, [face;
Through which Aurora shows her brightening
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns by living stream at eve."

It is true, that every enthusiastic lover of nature is not a poet: but a man can scarcely rise to the dignity of that high office who has not a touch of this enthusiasm. Poetry is essentially an imitative art; and he who is no lover of nature loses all the finest subjects of imitation. On the contrary, this attachment, especially if it be of an ardent character, supplies subjects to the muse everywhere. Winter or summer, the wilderness and the garden, the cedar of Libanus, and the hyssop on the wall; all that is dull and ineloquent to another has a voice for him, and rouses him to think, to feel, to admire, and to speak. The following lines are said to have been introduced into "The Task," to gratify Mrs. Unwin, after the first draught of the poem was finished. But what language can exhibit a more genuine attachment to nature!

"And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine . . . . . .
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
To serve occasion of poetic pomp
But genuine; and art partner of them all."

Nor was the delight which he derived from nature confined, in the case of our poet, to one sense. "All the *sounds*," he writes, "that nature utters are delightful, at least in this country." I should not perhaps find the roarings of lions in Africa, or of bears in Russia, very pleasing; but I know of no beast in England, whose voice I do not account musical, save and except only the braying of an ass. The notes of all our birds and fowls please me, without one exception. I should not indeed think of keeping a goose in a cage, that I might hang him up in the parlor for the sake of his melody, but the goose upon a common, or in a farmyard, is no bad performer. Seriously, however, it strikes me as a very observable instance of providential kindness to man, that such an exact accord has been contrived between his ear and the sounds with which, at least in a rural situation, it is almost every moment visited. The fields, the woods, the gardens, have each their concerts; and the ear of man is forever regaled by creatures who seem only to please themselves. Even the ears that are deaf to the Gospel are continually entertained, though without knowing it, by sounds for which they are solely indebted to its Author."*

It is interesting to compare with this the poetical expression of the same thought.

"Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid nature . . .
. . . . . .
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe or satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The live-long night. Nor those alone whose notes
Nice finger'd art must emulate in vain;
But cawing rooks, and kites, that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud;
The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me."

Another poetical quality in the mind of Cowper is his *ardent love of his species*—a love which led him to contemplate, with the most solicitous regard, their wants, tastes, passions; their diseases, and the appropriate remedies for them. It has been justly observed, that, if there are some who have little taste for the poetry which delineates only inanimate beings or objects, there is hardly any one who does not listen, with sympathy and delight, to that which exhibits the fortunes and feelings of man. The truth is, we suppose, that this last order of topics is most easily brought home to our own business and bosoms. Aristotle considers that the imitation or delineation of human action is one of the main objects of poetry. But if this be true, if the "proper study of mankind is man," and one of the highest offices of poetry be to exhibit, as upon the stage, the fortunes and passions of his fellow beings—few have attained such eminence in his art as Cowper. His hymns are the close tr a-

* Letter to M. Newton.

scripts of his own soul. His rhymed poems have more of a didactic character; but they are for the most part exhibitions of man in all his attitudes of thought and action. They are mirrors in which every man may contemplate his own mind. In the "Task," he passes every moment from the contemplation of nature to that of the being who inhabits this fair, though fallen, world. He lashes the vices, laughs at the follies, mourns over the guilt of his species; he spares no pains to conduct the guilty to the feet of their only true Friend, and to land the miserable amidst the green pastures and still waters of heavenly consolation.

Another property in the mind of Cowper, which has given birth to some of the noblest passages in his poems, is his intense love of freedom. The political state of this country was scarcely ever more degraded than at the period when he began to write; and every real patriot who could wield the pen, or lift the voice in the cause of legitimate and regulated freedom, had plenty to do at home. At the same period also the profligacy and tyranny of the privileged orders in France, and other of the old European dynasties, were such as to provoke the indignation of every lover of liberty. And lastly, at this time, that horrible traffic in human flesh, that capital crime, disgrace, and curse of the human species, the Slave Trade, prevailed in all its horrors. How splendid are many of the passages scattered so prodigally through his poems, in which the author rebukes the crimes of despotism and cruelty at home or abroad, and claims for mankind the high privileges with which God, by an everlasting charter, had endowed them.

What lines can breathe a deeper indignation than those quoted with such admiration by Mr. Fox, in the House of Commons, on the Bastile?

"Ye horrid towers, th' abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair.
That monarchs have supplied, from age to age,
With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men;
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last."

And what passage in any uninspired writer is more noble and heart-stirring, than that on the decision in the case tried by the illustrious Granville Sharpe, to establish the liberty of all who touched the soil of England—a passage confessedly the foundation of the noblest effort of Curran, in his great speech on the liberty of the subject!

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home—then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
Of all your empire; that, where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too."

But after all, perhaps, the peculiarity in the mind of Cowper, which gives the chief charm to his poetry, is the *depth and ardor of his piety.*

It is impossible not to be aware of the severance which critics have labored to effect between religion and poetry,—between the character of the prophet and the poet: and that Johnson's decision is thought by some to be final on the subject. Cowper himself admits that the connection has been rare between the two characters—as witness the following lines—

"Pity religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground! [to stray,
For flow'rs would spring where'er she deigned
And ev'ry muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penn'd;
But, unattir'd in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undrest,
Stands in the desert, shiv'ring and forlorn,
A wintry figure like a wither'd thorn."

But he does not despair of seeing some

"Bard all fire,
Touch'd with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That he who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is 'Love.'"

Indeed no theory can have less foundation either in philosophy or in fact, than that poetry and religion have too little in common, for either to gain by an attempt to unite them. They seem to us born for each other. And, so important is this topic, that, although at the risk of repeating what has been said elsewhere, it may be well for a moment, to dwell upon it.

The theory which endeavors to secure a perpetual divorce between religion and poetry has not the authority of the great critics of antiquity. Longinus maintains, in one place, that "he who aims at the reputation of a sublime writer must spare no labor to educate his soul to grandeur, and to impregnate it with great and generous ideas." And he affirms, in another, that "the faculties of the soul will grow stupid, the spirit be lost, and good sense and genius lie in ruins, when

the care and study of man is engaged about the mortal and worthless part of himself, and he has ceased to cultivate virtue, and polish up the nobler part, his soul." Quintilian has a whole chapter to prove that a great writer must be a good man. And the greatest modern critics hold the same language. But perhaps, in no passage is the truth upon this subject more nobly expressed, and a difficulty connected with it more ably explained, than in the following verses of a poem now difficult of access:

"But, of our souls the high-born loftier part,
Th' ethereal energies that touch the heart;
Conceptions ardent, laboring thought intense,
Creative fancy's wild magnificence;
And all the dread sublimities of song
—These, Virtue, these to thee alone belong.
Chill'd by the breath of Vice, their radiance dies,
And brightest burns, when lighted at the skies;
Like vestal lamps, to purest bosoms giv'n,
And kindled only by a ray from heav'n."*

Nor does this sentiment stand on the mere authority of critics; but appears to be founded on just views of the constitution of our nature. Lighter themes can be expected to awaken only light and transient feelings in the bosom. The profounder topics of religion sink deeper; touch all the hidden springs of thought and action; and awaken emotions, which have all the force and permanence of the great principles and interests in which they originate.

To us, no assertion would seem to have less warrant, than that *taste* suffers by its alliance with religion. The proper objects of taste are beauty and sublimity; and if (as a modern critic seems to us to have incontrovertibly established) beauty and sublimity do not reside in the mere forms and colors of the objects we contemplate, but in the associations which they suggest to the mind, it cannot be questioned that the associations suggested to a man of piety, exceed both in beauty and sublimity those of every other class. God, as a Father, is the most lovely of all objects—God, as an avenger, is the most terrible; and it is to the religious man exclusively, that this at once most tender and most terrible Being is disclosed, in all the beauty and majesty of holiness, by every object which he contemplates—

"Præsentiorem conspicimus Deum
Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
Clivosque præruptos sonantes,
Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem."

Or, as the same sentiment is expressed by Cowper,

"His are the mountains, and the valleys his
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say,—'My Father made them all!'"

It is striking to what an extent the greatest poets of all ages and countries have called in religion, under some form or other, to their assistance. How are the Iliad and Odyssey ennobled by their mythological machinery; by the scales of Fate, the frown of Jove, and the intercession of Minerva! How anxiously does Virgil labor to give a moral and religious character to his Georgics and Æneid! And how nobly do these kindred spirits, by a bold fiction bordering upon truth, display the eternal mansions of joy and of misery, of reward and of punishment; thus disclosing, not by the light of revelation, but by the blended flashes of genius and tradition, the strongest incentives to virtue, and the most terrific penalties of crime.

The same may be affirmed of many of our own most distinguished poets: of "the sage and serious Spenser," and the immortal author of "the Paradise Lost" himself. Nor can we hesitate to trace the deep interest continually excited by the poetry of Cowper in great measure, to the same source. Though often careless in the structure of his verse; though sometimes lame, and lengthy, and prosaic in his manner: though frequently employed about unpopular topics; he is perhaps the most popular, with the exception of one, of all the English poets: and we believe that the main source of his general acceptance is the fact that he never fails to introduce the Creator into the scenes of his own universe; that, by the soarings of his own mind, he lifts us from earth to heaven, and "makes us familiar with a world unseen;" that he draws largely from the mine of Scripture, and thus exhibits the majesty and love of the Divine Being, in words and imagery which the great object of his wonder and love Himself provides.

It is wholly needless for us to refer to any particular parts of the works of our author, as illustrative of his deep and sanguine spirit of piety. That spirit breathes through every line and letter. It is, if we may so speak, the animating soul of his verses. The mind of the Christian reader is refreshed, in every step of his progress, by the conviction that the songs thus sung on earth were taught from Heaven; and that, in resigning himself to the sweetest associate for this world, he is choosing the very best guide to another. Indeed, few have been disposed to deny to Cowper the highest of all poetical titles—that of The Poet of Christianity. In this field he has but one rival, the author of the "Paradise Lost." And happily the provinces which they have chosen for themselves within the sacred enclosure are, for the most part,

* Grant's (now Lord Glenelg) prize poem on "Restoration of Learning in the East."

so distinct, that it is scarcely necessary to bring them into comparison. The distinguishing qualities of Milton are a surpassing elevation of thought and energy of expression, which leave the mind scarcely able to breathe under the pressure of his majesty, courage, and sublimity. The main defect of his poetry, as has been justly stated by an anonymous critic, is "the absence of a charm neither to be named nor defined, which would render the whole as lovely as it is beautiful, and as captivating as it is sublime." "His poetry," it is added by the same critic, "will be ever praised by the many, and read by the few. The weakest capacity may be offended by its faults, but it requires a genius equal to his own to comprehend and enjoy all his merits.

"Cowper rarely equals Milton in sublimity, to which his subjects but seldom led; he excels him in easy expression, delicate pleasantry, and generous satire; and he resembles him in the temperate use of all his transcendent abilities. He never crushes his subject by falling upon it, nor permits his subject to crush him by falling beneath it. Invested with a sovereign command of diction, and enjoying unlimited freedom of thought, he is never prodigal of words, and he never riots amidst the exuberance of his conceptions; his economy displays his wealth, and his moderation is the proof of his power; his richest phrases seem the most obvious expression of his ideas, and his mightiest exertions are made apparently without toil. This, as we have already observed, is one of the grandest characteristics of Milton. It would be difficult to name a third poet of our country who could claim a similar distinction. Others, like Cowley, overwhelm their theme with their eloquence, or, like Young, sink exhausted beneath it, by aiming at magnificent, but unattainable compression; a third class, like Pope, whenever they write well, write their best, and never win but at full speed, and with all their might; while a fourth, like Dryden and Churchill, are confident of their strength, yet so careless of their strokes, that when they conquer, it seems a matter of course, and when they fall, a matter of no consequence, for they can rise again as soon as they please. Milton and Cowper alone appear always to walk *within* the limits of their genius, yet up to the height of their great argument. We are not pretending to exalt them above all other British poets; we have only compared them together on one point, wherein they accord with each other, and differ from the rest. But there is one feature of resemblance between them of a nobler kind. These good and faithful servants, who had received ten talents each, neither buried them in the earth, nor expended them for their own glory, nor lavished them in profligacy, but occupied them for their Master's service; and we trust have both entered into his joy. Their unfading labors, (not subject to change, from being formed according to the fashion of this world, but being of equal and eternal interest to man in all ages,) have disproved the idle and impious position which vain philosophy, hating all godliness, has endeavored to establish,—that religion can neither be adorned by poetry, nor poetry ennobled by religion."*

Having thus noticed some of those grand peculiarities in the mind of Cowper, which appear to have mainly contributed to place him among the highest order of poets, we proceed to point out some subordinate qualifications, without which, those already referred to would have failed to raise him to his present elevation. Even the buoyant spirit of a poet has certain inferior members by which it is materially assisted in its upward flight.

In the first place, then, he was one of the most *simple* and *natural* of all writers. With the exception of the sacred volume, it would perhaps be impossible to name any compositions with so large a proportion of simple ideas and Saxon monosyllables. He began to be an author when Pope, with his admirable critic Johnson, had established a taste for all that was most ornate, pompous, and complicated in phraseology. But, with due respect for the genius and power of this class of writers, he may be said to have hewn out for himself a new path to glory. It has been justly said by an accomplished modern critic and poet, that, "between the school of Dryden and Pope, with their few remembered successors, not one of whom ranks now above a fourth-rate poet; for Young, Thomson, Goldsmith, Gray, and Collins, though flourishing in the interval, were not of their school, but all, in their respective ways, originals:—between the school of Dryden and Pope, and our undisciplined, independent contemporaries, Cowper stands as having closed the age of the former illustrious masters, and commenced that of the eccentric leaders of the modern fashions in song. We cannot stop to trace the affinity which he bears to either of these generations, so dissimilar from each other; but it would be easy to show how little he owed to his immediate forerunners, and how much his immediate followers have been indebted to him. All the cant phrases, all the technicalities, of the former school he utterly threw away, and by his rejection of them they became obsolete. He boldly adopted cadences of verse unattempted before, which though frequently uncouth, and sometimes scarcely

* Eclectic Review. This criticism it has been ascertained is from the pen of Mr. James Montgomery; and the desire inseparably to connect what is so just and able with the works of Cowper has been the inducement, notwithstanding its length, to introduce it here.

reducible to rhythm, were not seldom ingeniously significant, and signally energetic. He feared not to employ colloquial, philosophical, judicial idioms, and forms of argument, and illustrations, which enlarged the vocabulary of poetical terms, less by recurring to obsolete ones, (which has been too prodigally done since,) than by hazardous, and generally happy innovations of more recent origin, which have become graceful and dignified by usage, though Pope and his imitators durst not have touched them. The eminent adventurous revivers of English poetry about thirty years ago, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, in their blank verse, trod directly in the steps of Cowper, and, in their early productions at least, were each, in a measure, what he made them. Our author may be legitimately styled the father of this triumvirate, who are, in truth, the living fathers of the innumerable race of moderns, whom no human ingenuity could well classify into their respective schools."*

The simplicity of Cowper as a thinker, examiner, and writer, is unquestionably one of his greatest charms. He constantly reminds us of a highly-gifted and intelligent child. In all that he says and does, there is a total absence of all plot and stratagem, of all pretensions to think profoundly, or write finely; though, without an effort, he does both. His manner is to invite you to walk abroad with him amidst the glories of nature; to fix at random on some point in the landscape; to display its beauties or its peculiarities—to touch on some feature which has, perhaps, altogether escaped your own eye—to pour out the simplest thoughts in the simplest language—and to make you feel that never man before had so sweet, so moral, so devout, so affectionate, so gifted, so musical a companion. The simplicity of his style is, we believe, considering its strength, without a parallel. No author, perhaps, has done more to recover the language of our country from the grasp and tyranny of a foreign idiom, and to teach English people to speak in English accents. In some instances, it may be granted, that he is somewhat more colloquial and homely than the dignity of his subject warrants. But for offences of this kind he makes the amplest compensation, by leading us to those "wells of undefiled English," at which he had drunk so deeply, and whence alone the pure streams of our national composition are to be drawn.

It is next to be noticed, as to the style of Cowper, that it is as *nervous* as it is clear and unpretending. It is impossible to compare the works of Addison, and others of the simple class of writers, with Johnson, and those of the opposite class, without feeling that what they gain in simplicity they often lose in strength and power. But the language of Cowper is often to the full as vigorous and masculine as that of Shakspeare. Bring a tyrant or a slave-driver before him for judgment; and the axe of the one and the scourge of the other are not keener weapons than the words of the poet.

It would be difficult to find in any writer a more striking example of nervous phraseology than we have in the well-known lines:

"But hark—the doctor's voice!—fast wedged between
Two empirics he stands, and with swoll'n cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective, is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs!
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismissed
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to pray'r
Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gall'ry critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware?
O name it not in Gath!—It cannot be, [aid.
That grave and learned clerks should need such
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll;
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church!"

In the next place, it will not be questioned, we think, by any reader of the preceding letters, that Cowper was a *wit* of the very highest order—and this quality is by no means confined to his prose, but enters largely into everything that he writes. No author surprises us more frequently with rapid turns and unexpected coincidences. The mock sublime is one of his favorite implements; and he employs it with almost unrivalled success. There is also a delicacy of touch in his witticisms which is more easily felt than described. And his wit has this noble singularity, that it is never derived from wrong sources, or directed to wrong ends. It never wounds a feeling heart, or deepens the blush upon a modest cheek. Other wits are apt to dip their vessels in any stream which presents itself; Cowper draws only from the purest fountains. It has been said of Sterne, that he hides his pearls in a ditch, and forces his readers to dive for them; but the witticisms of Cowper are as well calculated to instruct as to delight.

This last topic is intimately connected with another, which, in touching on the excellences of Cowper as a poet, cannot be passed over,—we mean, the astonishing *fertility of his imagination*. It was observed to the writer of these pages by the late Sir James Mackintosh, of the friend and ornament of his species, William Wilberforce, that "he

* Montgomery's Essay on Cowper's Poems.

was perhaps the finest of all orators of his own particular order—that the wealth of his imagination was such, that no idea seemed to present itself to his mind without its accompanying image or ghost, which he could produce at his pleasure, and which it was a matter of self-denial if he did not produce." And the latter part of this criticism might seem to be made for Cowper. His mind appears never to wait for an image, but to be overrun by them. In argument or description—in hurling the thunders of rebuke, or whispering the messages of mercy—he does but wave his wand, and a host of spiritual essences descend to darken or brighten the scenes at his bidding; to supply new weapons of rebuke, or new visions of love and joy. Some of his personifications are among the finest specimens in any language. What, for example, has more of the genuine spirit of poetry, than the personification of Famine, in the following lines?—

"He calls for Famine . . . . . .
. . . . . and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips
And taints the golden ear."

What is more lively or forcible than his description of Time?—

"Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoiled and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the world's Time is Time in masquerade!
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes; and where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form.
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblems of untimely graves.
What should be and what was an hour-glass
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace [once,
Well does the work of his destructive scythe."

What, again, is superior in this way to his address to Winter?—

"O Winter! ruler of the inverted year!
Thy scattered hair with sleet-like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows [clouds,
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in
A lifeless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels
But urged by storms along its slippery way."

But the examples of this species of personification are without number: and we are not afraid to bring many of them into comparison with the Discord of Homer, the Fame of Virgil, or the Famine of Ovid—passages of so powerful a cast as at once, and without any assistance, to establish the poetical authority of their inventors.

It may seem strange to some, that we should assign a place, among the poetical claims of Cowper, to his *strong sense*. He appears to us to be one of the most just, natural, and rational of all writers; and, however poetry may seem to appropriate to herself rather the remote and visionary regions of fiction than that of dull reality, we are disposed to think, that, even in her wildest wanderings, she will maintain no real and permanent ascendency over the mind, if she widely deviates from nature and good sense. "Monstrous sights," says Beattie, and he might have added, monstrous conceptions, "please but for a moment, if they please at all; for they derive their charm merely from the beholders' amazement. I have read indeed of a man of rank in Sicily who chooses to adorn his villa with pictures and statues of the most unnatural deformity. But it is a singular instance; and one would not be much more surprised to hear of a man living without food, or growing fat upon poison. To say of anything that it is 'contrary to nature,' denotes censure and disgust on the part of the speaker; as the epithet 'natural' intimates an agreeable quality, and seems, for the most part, to imply that a thing is as it ought to be, suitable to our own taste, and congenial to our own disposition. . . . Think how we should relish a painting in which there was no regard to colors, proportions, or any of the physical laws of nature; where the eyes and ears of animals were placed in their shoulders; where the sky was green, and the grass crimson." Such distortions and anomalies would not be less offensive in poetry than in the sister art. And it is one of the main sources of delight in Cowper, that all is in its due proportion, and wears its right colors; that the "eyes and ears" are in "their proper places;" that his skies are blue, and his grass is green; and that every reflection of the poet has, what he himself calls the

"Stamp and clear impression of good sense."

The very passage in the sixth book of "The Task," from which this line is taken, and which furnishes perhaps the most perfect uninspired delineation of a true Christian, supplies, at the same time, an admirable example of the quality we mean; and shows, that even where his feelings were the most intensely interested, his passions were under the control of his reason; that, when he mounted the chariot of the sun, he took care not to approach too near the flaming luminary.

It would be impossible, in a sketch such as this, not to advert to the powers of the author as a *satirist*. And here, we think the most partial critic will be scarcely disposed to deny, that he sometimes handles his knife a little at random and with too much severity. He had early in life been intimate with Churchill; and, with scarcely a touch of the temper of that right English poet, had plainly

caught something of his manner. There is this wide distinction between him and his master—that his irony and rebuke are never the weapons of party, or personality, but of truth, honor, and the public good. The strong, though homely image, applied by Churchill to another critic,—

> "Like a butcher, doom'd for life
> In his mouth to wear his knife,"—

is too just a picture of its author, but is infinitely far from being that of Cowper. It was well said of his satire, that "it was the offspring of benevolence; and that, like the Pelian spear, it furnishes the only cure for the wound it inflicts. When he is obliged to blame, he pities; when he condemns, it is with regret. His censures display no triumphant superiority; but rather express a turn of feeling such as we might suppose angels to indulge in at the prospect of human frailty."

But, if his satirical powers were sometimes indulged to excess, it is impossible to deny that he was, generally and habitually, of all poets, the most *sympathizing and tender.* Nothing in human composition can surpass the tenderness of the poem on receiving his mother's picture, or of those exquisite lines addressed to a lady in France suffering under deep calamity, of which last we shall quote a few for the ornament of our page:—

> "The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
> Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown:
> No trav'ller ever reach'd that blest abode,
> Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
> The world may dance along the flowery plain,
> Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain,
> Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread
> With unshod feet they yet securely tread,
> Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
> Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
> But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
> How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
> That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,
> A life of ease would make them harder still,
> In pity to the souls his grace design'd
> To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
> Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
> And said, 'Go spend them in the vale of tears.'
> O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
> O salutary streams that murmur there!
> These flowing from the fount of grace above,
> Those breathed from lips of everlasting love."

The Hymns are almost uniformly of the same character. Drawn from the deep recesses of a broken heart, they find a short and certain way to the bosom of others.

And this leads to the notice of another peculiarity in his writings. It is said to have been a favorite maxim with Lord Byron, "that every writer is interesting to others in proportion as he is able and willing to seize and to display to them the hidden workings of his own soul." The noble critic is himself a strong exemplification of the truth of his own rule. Not merely his heroes and his heroines, but his rocks, mountains, and rivers, are a sort of *fac simile* of himself. The blue lake reposing among the mountains is the bard in a state of repose. The thunder leaping from rock to rock is the same mind under the strong excitement of passion. But perhaps of all writers Cowper is the most habitually what may be termed an experimentalist in poetry. He sought in "the man within," the secret machinery by which to touch and to control the world without. He felt deeply; and caught the feeling as it arose, and transferred it, warm from the heart, to his own paper. Hence one great attraction of his writings. "As face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man." The sensations of other men are to a great degree our own; and the poetical exhibition of these sensations is the presenting to us a sort of illuminated mirror in which we see ourselves, and are, according to the view, moved to sorrow or to joy. Preachers as well as poets will do well to remember this law of our nature, and will endeavor to analyze and to delineate their own feelings, if they mean to reach those of others. Unhappily, the noble author of this canon in philosophy and literature had no very profitable picture of this kind to display to his fellow men. He speaks, however, of "unmasking the hell that dwelt within." And he has taught no unimportant lesson to his species, if he has instructed us in the utter wretchedness of those who, gifted with the noblest powers, refuse to consecrate them to the glorious Giver. But, however unprofitable his own application of the rule, the rule itself is valuable; and, in the case of Cowper, we have the application of it, both on the largest scale and to the best possible purpose.

There is one other feature in the mind of Cowper on which, before quitting the subject of this examination, we must be permitted to say a few words. It has been the habit with many, while freely conceding to our poet most of the humbler claims to reputation for which we have contended, to assign him only a second or third place in the scale of poets, on the ground that he is, according to their estimate, altogether "incapable of the *true sublime.*" Now, it must be admitted that, if the only true sublimity in writing be to write like Milton, Cowper cannot be ranked in the same class as a poet. Of Milton it may be said, in the words of a poet as great as himself—

> "He doth bestride the world
> Like a Colossus: and we petty men
> Walk under his huge legs."

Nothing can be more astonishing than the composure and dignity with which, like his own Satan, he climbs the "empyreal height" —sails between worlds and worlds—and

moves among thrones and principalities, as if in his natural element. "The genius of Cowper," as it has been justly said, "did not lead him to emulate the songs of the seraphim:" but though, in one respect, he moves in a lower region than his great master in what may be termed the "moral sublime," he is by no means inferior to him. Scarcely any poetry awakens in the mind more of those deep emotions of "pity and terror," which the great critic of antiquity describes as the main sources of the sublime; and by which poetry is said to "*purge* the mind of her votaries." In this view of the sublime we know of few passages which surpass the description of "liberty of soul," in the conclusion of the 5th book of "The Task."

"Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul; and, by a flash from heav'n,
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not,
Till Thou hast touch'd them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud hosanna sent from all thy works;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the gen'ral praise.
In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties; who, retir'd
Behind His own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From Thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honor, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavor, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But, O Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away!"

In like manner the Millennium of Cowper is at least not inferior to the Messiah of Pope. The corresponding passage in the latter writer is greatly inferior to that in which our poet says,—

". . . . . No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now—the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's hand
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, and to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue."

And few passages in any poem have more of the true sublime than that which follows soon after the last extract:—

"One song employs all nations, and all cry
'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!'
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy:
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

Having offered these general observations "on the Genius and Poetry" of Cowper, and having so largely drawn from his sweet and instructive pages, it is not thought necessary to supply any more specific notice of his several poems. It is superfluous to enter upon a detailed proof that his poems in rhyme, though occasionally brightened by passages of extraordinary merit, are often prosaic in their character, and halting and feeble in the versification; that his shorter poems, whether of a gay or of a devotional cast, are, for pathos, wit, delicacy of conception, and felicity of expression, unequalled in our language; that his Homer is an evidence, not of his incapacity as a translator, but of the impossibility of transmuting into stiff unyielding English monosyllables the rich compounds of the Greek, without a sacrifice both of sound and sense; that "The Task" outruns in power, variety, depth of thought, fertility of imagination, vigor of expression, in short, in all which constitutes a poet of the highest order, every hope which his earlier poems had allowed his readers to indulge. The dawn gave little or no promise of such a day. The porch was in no sense commensurate to the temple afterwards to be erected. On the whole, his "Poems" will always be considered as one of the richest legacies which genius and virtue have bequeathed to mankind; and will be welcomed wherever the English language is known, and English minds, tastes, and habits prevail; wherever the approbation of what is good and the abhorrence of what is evil are felt; wherever truth is honored, and God and his creatures are loved.

With these observations we bring our imperfect criticisms on the Poems of Cowper to a conclusion. The writer of them does not hesitate to say that he has been amply rewarded for his own critical labors, by the privilege of often escaping from his own page to that of his author. And the reader of them will be still more largely compensated if, when weary of the critic, he will turn aside to breathe an ardent supplication to the Giver of all that was good and great in Cowper, that he himself may drink deeply of the spirit, without participating in the sorrows of this most holy, most distinguished, most suffering, but now most triumphant, servant of the God and Saviour to whom he so nobly and habitually dedicated all his powers.

PREFACE TO THE POEMS.

When an author, by appearing in print, requests an audience of the public, and is upon the point of speaking for himself, whoever presumes to step before him with a preface, and to say, "Nay, but hear me first," should have something worthy of attention to offer, or he will be justly deemed officious and impertinent. The judicious reader has probably, upon other occasions, been beforehand with me in this reflection; and I am not very willing it should now be applied to me, however I may seem to expose myself to the danger of it. But the thought of having my own name perpetuated in connection with the name in the title-page is so pleasing and flattering to the feelings of my heart, that I am content to risk something for the gratification.

This Preface is not designed to commend the Poems to which it is prefixed. My testimony would be insufficient for those who are not qualified to judge properly for themselves, and unnecessary to those who are. Besides, the reasons which render it improper and unseemly for a man to celebrate his own performances, or those of his nearest relatives, will have some influence in suppressing much of what he might otherwise wish to say in favor of a friend, when that friend is indeed an *alter idem*, and excites almost the same emotions of sensibility and affection as he feels for himself.

It is very probable these Poems may come into the hands of some persons, in whom the sight of the author's name will awaken a recollection of incidents and scenes, which through length of time they had almost forgotten. They will be reminded of one who was once the companion of their chosen hours, and who set out with them in early life in the paths which lead to literary honors, to influence and affluence, with equal prospects of success. But he was suddenly and powerfully withdrawn from those pursuits, and he left them without regret: yet not till he had sufficient opportunity of counting the cost, and of knowing the value of what he gave up. If happiness could have been found in classical attainments, in an elegant taste, in the exertions of wit, fancy, and genius, and in the esteem and converse of such persons, as in these respects were most congenial with himself, he would have been happy. But he was not—he wondered (as thousands in a similar situation still do) that he should continue dissatisfied, with all the means apparently conducive to satisfaction within his reach—But in due time the cause of his disappointment was discovered to him—he had lived without God in the world. In a memorable hour, the wisdom which is from above visited his heart. Then he felt himself a wanderer, and then he found a guide. Upon this change of views, a change of plan and conduct followed of course. When he saw the busy and the gay world in its true light, he left it with as little reluctance as a prisoner, when called to liberty, leaves his dungeon. Not that he became a Cynic or an Ascetic—a heart filled with love to God will assuredly breathe benevolence to men. But the turn of his temper inclining him to rural life, he indulged it, and, the providence of God evidently preparing his way and marking out his retreat, he retired into the country. By these steps, the good hand of God, unknown to me, was providing for me one of the principal blessings of my life; a friend and a counsellor, in whose company for almost seven years, though we were seldom seven successive waking hours separated, I always found new pleasure—a friend who was not only a comfort to myself, but a blessing to the affectionate poor people among whom I then lived.

Some time after inclination had thus removed him from the hurry and bustle of life, he was still more secluded by a long indisposition, and my pleasure was succeeded by a proportionable degree of anxiety and concern. But a hope, that the God whom he served would support him under his affliction, and at length vouchsafe him a happy deliverance, never forsook me. The desirable crisis, I trust, is now nearly approaching. The dawn, the presage of returning day, is already arrived. He is again enabled to resume his pen, and some of the first fruits of his recovery are here presented to the public. In his principal subjects, the same acumen, which distinguished him in the early period of life, is happily employed in illustrating and enforcing the truths of which he received such deep and unalterable impressions in his maturer years. His satire, if it may be called so, is benevolent, (like the operations of the skilful

and humane surgeon, who wounds only to heal.) dictated by a just regard for the honor of God, an indignant grief excited by the profligacy of the age, and a tender compassion for the souls of men.

His favorite topics are least insisted on in the piece entitled Table Talk; which therefore, with some regard to the prevailing taste, and that those, who are governed by it, may not be discouraged at the very threshold from proceeding farther, is placed first. In most of the large poems which follow, his leading design is more explicitly avowed and pursued. He aims to communicate his own perceptions of the truth, beauty, and influence of the religion of the Bible—a religion, which, however discredited by the misconduct of many, who have not renounced the Christian name, proves itself, when rightly understood, and cordially embraced, to be the grand desideratum, which alone can relieve the mind of man from painful and unavoidable anxieties, inspire it with stable peace and solid hope, and furnish those motives and prospects which, in the present state of things, are absolutely necessary to produce a conduct worthy of a rational creature, distinguished by a vastness of capacity which no assemblage of earthly good can satisfy, and by a principle and preintimation of immortality.

At a time when hypothesis and conjecture in philosophy are so justly exploded, and little is considered as deserving the name of knowledge, which will not stand the test of experiment, the very use of the term experimental in religious concernments is by too many unhappily rejected with disgust. But we well know, that they, who affect to despise the inward feelings which religious persons speak of, and to treat them as enthusiasm and folly, have inward feelings of their own, which, though they would, they cannot, suppress. We have been too long in the secret ourselves, to account the proud, the ambitious, or the voluptuous, happy. We must lose the remembrance of what we once were, before we can believe that a man is satisfied with himself, merely because he endeavors to appear so. A smile upon the face is often but a mask worn occasionally and in company, to prevent, if possible, a suspicion of what at the same time is passing in the heart. We know that there are people who seldom smile when they are alone, who therefore are glad to hide themselves in a throng from the violence of their own reflections; and who, while by their looks and their language they wish to persuade us they are happy, would be glad to change their condition with a dog. But in defiance of all their efforts they continue to think, forbode, and tremble. This we know, for it has been our own state, and therefore we know how to commiserate it in others.—From this state the Bible relieved us—when we were led to read it with attention, we found ourselves described. We learned the causes of our inquietude—we were directed to a method of relief—we tried, and we were not disappointed.

Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.

We are now certain that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It has reconciled us to God, and to ourselves, to our duty and our situation. It is the balm and cordial of the present life, and a sovereign antidote against the fear of death.

Sed hactenus hæc. Some smaller pieces upon less important subjects close the volume. Not one of them, I believe, was written with a view to publication, but I was unwilling they should be omitted.

JOHN NEWTON.

Charles Square, Hoxton,
February 18, 1782.

TABLE TALK.

Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicito. HOR. LIB. I., EP. 13.

THE ARGUMENT.

True and false glory—Kings made for man—Attributes of royalty in England—Quevedo's satire on kings—Kings objects of pity—Inquiry concerning the cause of Englishmen's scorn of arbitrary rule—Character of the Englishman and the Frenchman—Charms of freedom—Freedom sometimes needs the restraint of discipline—Reference to the riots in London—Tribute to Lord Chatham—Political state of England—The vices that debase her portend her downfall—Political events the instruments of Providence—The poet disclaims prophetic inspiration—The choice of a mean subject denotes a weak mind—Reference to Homer, Virgil, and Milton—Progress of poesy—The poet laments that religion is not more frequently united with poetry.

A. You told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt:
The deeds, that men admire as half divine,
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares;
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And cats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that, men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war.
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with Justice on his side.
Let laurels drench'd in pure Parnassian dews
Reward his memory, dear to every muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honor's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men man owes
His portion in the good that Heaven bestows.
And, when recording History displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts, that fought and died,
Where duty placed them, at their country's side;
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.
But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch to nought but his ambition true,
Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself stationed on a towering rock,
To see a people scattered like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels;
Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet.
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
The glass, that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And Death's own scythe, would better speak his power;
Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade;
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man:
Kings do but reason on the self-same plan;
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

B. Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in royal brains;
Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings! those optics are but dim
That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.
That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined,
To catch renown by ruining mankind,
Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.
Oh! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood!
To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward;
Keep Vice restrain'd behind a double guard;
To quell the faction that affronts the throne
By silent magnanimity alone;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts;
Watch every beam Philosophy imparts;
To give religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;
With close fidelity and love unfeign'd
To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise;
His life a lesson to the land he sways;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw;
To sheath it in the peace-restoring close
With joy beyond what victory bestows—
Blest country, where these kingly glories shine!
Blest England, if this happiness be thine!

A. Guard what you say: the patriotic tribe
Will sneer and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* bribe?
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
To lure me to the baseness of a lie;
And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast,)
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.
Those arts be theirs who hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.

A. Your smooth eulogium, to one crown addressed
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Ask'd when in hell, to see the royal jail;
Approv'd their method in all other things;
But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?
There—said his guide—the group is in full view.
Indeed!—replied the don—there are but few.
His black interpreter the charge disdain'd—
Few, fellow?—there are all that ever reign'd.
Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty both alike:
I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here;
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's grace the historic page.

A. Kings then at last have but the lot of all:
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

B. True. While they live, the courtly laureate pays
His quitrent ode, his peppercorn of praise,
And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite:
A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game!
Thus, free from censure, overawed by fear,
And prais'd for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage:
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask with busy scorn, Was this the man?
I pity kings whom worship waits upon,
Obsequious from the cradle to the throne;
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;
If smooth dissimulation, skill'd to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;
If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
That wants no driving and disdains the lead;
If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
Shouldering and standing as if stuck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on—
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings!
To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
E'en when he labors for his country's good;
To see a band call'd patriot for no cause,
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all the anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels;
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident, when palpably most wrong—
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I be poor and free!
To be the Table Talk of clubs up stairs,
To which the unwash'd artificer repairs,
To indulge his genius after long fatigue,
By diving into cabinet intrigue;
(For what kings deem a toil as well they may,
To him is relaxation, and mere play:) [vail,
To win no praise when well-wrought plans pre-
But to be rudely censur'd when they fail;
To doubt the love his favorites may pretend,
And in reality to find no friend;
If he indulge a cultivated taste,
His galleries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it call'd extravagance and waste;
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease;
However humble and confined the sphere,
Happy the state that has not these to fear!

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt
On situations that they never felt,
Start up sagacious, cover'd with the dust
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove.
Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares;
They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs;
Poets, of all men, ever least regret
Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fix'd attention more than you.

B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
To turn the course of Helicon that way:
Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.

A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
When ministers and ministerial arts;
Patriots, who love good places at their hearts;
When admirals, extoll'd for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill;
Generals, who will not conquer when they may,
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay;
When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
Though discontent alone can find out where—
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear as mute as if a syren sung.
Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains?
That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

B. The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here
With stern severity deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers;
Unwelcome vapors quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams:
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work;
Thus with a rigor, for his good design'd,
She rears her favorite man of all mankind.
His form robust, and of elastic tone,
Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.
Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul;
But, if authority grow wanton, woe
To him that treads upon his free-born toe;
One step beyond the boundary of the laws
Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.
Thus proud Prerogative, not much rever'd,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard;

And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.
Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd like us, with such Herculean powers,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of misery far away:
He drinks his simple beverage with a gust;
And, feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel the alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols, Vive le Roi!
Filled with as much true merriment and glee
As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.
Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid;
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;
He can encourage slavery to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.

A. Freeman and slave then if the case be such,
Stand on a level; and you prove too much:
If all men indiscriminately share
His fostering power, and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by Despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land. [show,

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains beneath her happy reign
The growth that Nature meant she should attain;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Opening and wider opening on her view,
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course:
Religion, richest favor of the skies,
Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes;
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away.
The soul, emancipated, unoppress'd,
Free to prove all things and hold fast the best,
Learns much; and to a thousand listening minds
Communicates with joy the good she finds;
Courage in arms and ever prompt to show
His manly forehead to the fiercest foe;
Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
His spirits rising as his toils increase.
Guards well what arts and industry have won,
And Freedom claims him for her firstborn son.
Slaves fight for what were better cast away—
The chain that binds them and a tyrant's sway,
But they that fight for freedom undertake
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake:
Religion virtue, truth whate'er we call
A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.
O Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
The poet's muse his passion, and his theme;
Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse;
Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone the rapture it inspires.
Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
And I will sing, if Liberty be there;
And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet
In Afric's torrid clime or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please; in such a cause I
An English poet's privilege to rant: [grant
But is not Freedom—at least is not ours
Too apt to play the wanton with her powers
Grow freakish and, o'erleaping every mound
Spread anarchy and terror all around?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
For bounding and curveting in his course?
Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
He break away, and seek the distant plain?
No. His high mettle, under good control [goal.
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the
Let Discipline employ her wholesome arts;
Let magistrates alert perform their parts,
Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desperate task;
Let active laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the peace that riot would disturb:
And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When Tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar;
When he usurp'd authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face;
When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy,
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy;
Liberty blush'd and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread;
Blush'd that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.
Incomparable gem! thy worth untold;
Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away
when sold;
May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend!
Prize it, ye ministers; ye monarchs, spare;
Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care.

A. Patriots, alas! the few that have been found,
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene when Chatham died.

B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him Demosthenes was heard again;
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose;
And every venal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke.
Such men are raised to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land.
He speaks and they appear; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow;
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
So Gideon earned a victory not his own;
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.
Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear.
The nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey; [bay:
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at
Undaunted still though wearied and perplex'd,
Once Chatham saved thee; but who saves thee
Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along [next?
All that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,
The prize of happier times will serve thee now.
Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
Patterns of every virtue every grace,

Confess'd a God; they kneel'd before they fought,
And praised him in the victories he wrought.
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
The stream that feeds the wellspring of the heart
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine
The powers that sin has brought to a decline.

A. The inestimable estimate of Brown
Rose like a paper-kite and charm'd the town;
But measures plann'd and executed well,
Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
He trod the very selfsame ground you tread,
And victory refuted all he said.

B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss;
Its error, if it err'd, was merely this—
He thought the dying hour already come,
And a complete recovery struck him dumb.
But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must;
And that a nation shamefully debased
Will be despised and trampled on at last,
Unless sweet penitence her powers renew,
Is truth, if history itself be true.
There is a time, and justice marks the date,
For long forbearing clemency to wait;
That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
Is punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt.
If Mercy then put by the threatening blow,
Must she perform the same kind office now?
May she! and, if offended Heaven be still
Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.
'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
The tempest of tumultuary joys.
Nor is it yet despondence and dismay
Will win her visits or engage her stay;
Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)
In prostitution sinks the sense of shame;
When infamous venality, grown bold,
Writes on his bosom, to be let or sold;
When perjury, that Heaven-defying vice,
Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
To turn a penny in the way of trade;
When avarice starves (and never hides his face)
Two or three millions of the human race,
And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,
Though conscience will have twinges now and [then:
When profanation of the sacred cause
In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost,
In all that wars against that title most;
What follows next let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate proclaim.
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome
Speak to the present times and times to come;
They cry aloud in every careless ear,
Stop, while ye may; suspend your mad career;
O learn, from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late!

Not only Vice disposes and prepares
The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to tyranny's usurp'd command,
And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws
Unchangeably connected with its cause);
But Providence himself will intervene,
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores;
The standards of all nations are unfurl'd;
She has one foe, and that one foe the world.
And if he doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with a seal of wrath press'd down,
Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment proof:
Earth shakes beneath them, and Heaven roars
above;
But nothing scares them from the course they love.
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and uneoncern,
Down to the gulf from which is no return.
They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail!
They trust in armies, and their courage dies;
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;
But all they trust in withers, as it must,
When He commands in whom they place no trust.
Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast
A long despised, but now victorious, host;
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
The noble sweep of all their privilege;
Gives liberty the last, the mortal, shock;
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach,
Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach?

B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
The Muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
If human woes her soft attention claim,
A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
She pours a sensibility divine
Along the nerve of every feeling line.
But if a deed not tamely to be borne
Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
The storm of music shakes the astonish'd crowd.
So, when remote futurity is brought
Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart; he looks to distant storms;
He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers!
And, arm'd with strength surpassing human
powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
Of prophet and of poet was the same;
Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
And every hallowed druid was a bard.
But no prophetic fires to me belong;
I play with syllables and sport in song.

A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,
Where Discipline helps opening buds of sense
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
I was a poet too: but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
Thus all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,

If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.
B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course,
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When labor and when dullness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clockwork tintinnabulum of rhyme,
Exact and regular the sounds will be;
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.
From him who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song;
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there;
Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains;
A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke—
An art contriv'd to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between;
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.
To dally much with subjects mean and low
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
Neglected talents rust into decay,
And every effort ends in pushpin play
The man that means success should soar above
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove;
Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
The fruit of all her labor is whipp'd cream.
As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
Stoop'd from its highest pitch to pounce a wren.
As if the poet, purposing to wed,
Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.
Ages elaps'd ere Homer's lamp appear'd,
And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard;
To carry nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,
And shot a day-spring into distant climes,
Ennobling every region that he chose;
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose;
And, tedious years of Gothic darkness pass'd,
Emerged all splendor in our isle at last.
Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
Then show far off their shining plumes again.
A. Is genius only found in epic lays?
Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
Make their heroic powers your own at once,
Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.
B. These were the chief; each interval of night
Was graced with many an undulating light.
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
A meteor, or a star; in these, the sun.
The nightingale may claim the topmost bough
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
Like him unnoticed I and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly;
Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command;
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.
In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded poetry was not an art;
Language, above all teaching, or if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstacy, unmanacled by form,
Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent—a God the theme!
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as his love,
Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things—
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings;
But still, while virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral and so far was right.
'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refined;
Then Genius danced a bacchanal; he crown'd
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reel'd,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires:
Anacreon, Horace, play'd in Greece and Rome
This bedlam part; and others nearer home,
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reign'd
The proud protector of the power he gain'd,
Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
The dark and sullen humor of the time
Judged every effort of the muse a crime;
Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste.
But when the second Charles assumed the sway
And arts revived beneath a softer day,
Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
The mind, released from too constrain'd a nerve,
Flew to its first position with a spring,
That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
From these a long succession, in the rage
Of rank obscenity, debauch'd their age:
Nor ceased till, ever anxious to redress
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
And claim the palm for purity of song,
That lewdness had usurp'd and worn so long.
Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,
That neither gave nor would endure offence,
Whipp'd out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.
In front of these came Addison. In him
Humor in holiday and slightly trim,
Sublimity and Attic taste combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace,
That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art;
And every warbler has his tune by heart.

Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.
A. Are we then left?—*B.* Not wholly in the dark;
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.
Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one;
Short his career indeed, but ably run;
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours;
And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigor of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
And took, too often, there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
The laurel seem'd to wait on his command;
He snatch'd it rudely from the muses' hand.
Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower:
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads;
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music modulating all their notes;
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own:
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
Fancy, that from the bow that spans the sky
Brings colors, dipp'd in heaven, that never die;
A soul exalted above earth, a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind;
And, as the sun, in rising beauty dress'd,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close;
An eye like his to catch the distant goal;
Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys:
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground! [stray,
The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to
And every muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penn'd;
But, unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,
Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped;
Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread,
Satire has long since done his best; and curst
And loathsome ribaldry has done his worst;
Fancy has sported all her powers away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire, [lyre,
Touch'd with a coal from heaven, assume the
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That He, who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.
For, after all, if merely to beguile,
By flowing numbers and a flowery style,
The tedium that the lazy rich endure,
Which now and then sweet poetry may cure;
Or, if to see the name of idol self, [shelf,
Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the
To float a bubble on the breath of fame,
Prompt his endeavor and engage his aim,
Debased to servile purposes of pride,
How are the powers of genius misapplied!
The gift, whose office is the Giver's praise,
To trace him in his word, his works, his ways!
Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight:
Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase at the fool-frequented fair
Of vanity a wreath for self to wear,
Is profanation of the basest kind—
Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.
A. Hail, Sternhold, then! and, Hopkins, hail!
—*B.* Amen.
If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen;
If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce; [ease,
Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's
With all that fancy can invent to please,
Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.
A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.
B. No matter—we could shift when they were not;
And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

Si quid loquar audiendum. Hor. lib. iv. Od. 2.

THE ARGUMENT.

Origin of error—Man endowed with freedom of will—Motives for action—Attractions of music—The chase—Those amusements not suited to the Clergy—Case of Occiduus—Force of example—Due observance of the Sabbath—Cards and dancing—The drunkard and the coxcomb—Folly and innocence—Hurtful pleasures—Virtuous pleasures—Effects of the inordinate indulgence of pleasure—Dangerous tendency of many works of imagination—Apostrophe to Lord Chesterfield—Our earliest years the most important—Fashionable education—The grand tour—Accomplishments have taken the place of virtue—Qualities requisite in a critic of the Bible—Power of the press—Solicitude of enthusiasm to make proselytes—Fondness of authors for their literary progeny—The blunderer impatient of contradiction—Moral faults and errors of the understanding reciprocally produce one another—The cup of pleasure to be tasted with caution—Force of habit—The wanderer from the right path directed to the Cross.

Sing, muse, (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a muse to grace it with a song),
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine!
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.
Not all, whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her muzy windings to their end;
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear;
Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
Shines as it runs, but, grasp'd at, slips away.
Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis or abuse;
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say, to what bar amenable were man?
With nought in charge he could betray no trust;
And, if he fell, would fall because he must:
If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
His recompense in both unjust alike.
Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action, to the test;
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains
As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.
Heaven from above, and conscience from within,
Cries in his startled ear—Abstain from sin!
The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire;
While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows virtue as its sure reward;
And pleasure brings as surely in her train
Remorse and sorrow, and vindictive pain.
Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice,
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present or in prospect meet his sight:
Those open on the spot their honeyed store;
These call him loudly to pursuit of more.
His unexhausted mine the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.
Here various motives his ambition raise—
Power, pomp, and splendor, and the thirst of praise;
There beauty wooes him with expanded arms;
E'en bacchanalian madness has its charms.
Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.
Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!
O what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis harmony, from yon sequester'd bower.
Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour!
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course the enchantment was begun;
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain
Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your adored employ,
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heaven's harmony is universal love; [bined,
And earthly sounds, though sweet and well com-
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave vice and folly unsubdued behind.
Grey dawn appears; the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain;
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighboring lairs;
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle as the stanchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy the danger and the toil o'erpays—
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
Again impetuous to the field he flies;
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies;

Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.
Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world and stars of human race;
But, if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous and view'd with fear:
The comet's baneful influence is a dream;
Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.
What then! are appetites and lusts laid down
With the same ease that mun puts on his gown?
Will avarice and concupiscence give place,
Charm'd by the sounds—Your Reverence, or your Grace?
No. But his own engagement binds him fast;
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last
What atheists call him—a designing knave,
A mere church juggler, hypocrite and slave.
Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
A cassock'd huntsman and a fiddling priest!
He from Italian songsters takes his cue:
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field. The master of the pack
Cries—Well done, saint! and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a waymark on the road to bliss?
Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
Send your dishonor'd gown to Monmouth-street!
The sacred function in your hands is made—
Sad sacrilege—no function, but a trade!
Occiduus is a pastor of renown,
When he has pray'd and preach'd the sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quavering and semiquavering care away.
The full concerto swells upon your ear; I swear
All elbows shake. Look in, and you would
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
Had summon'd them to serve his golden god.
So well that thought the employment seems to suit,
Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
O fie! 'tis evangelical and pure:
Observe each face, how sober and demure!
Ecstacy sets her stamp on every mien;
Chins fallen, and not an eyeball to be seen.
Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charm'd me much (not e'en Occiduus more),
Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.
Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
Resort to this example as a rock;
There stand and justify the foul abuse
Of sabbath hours with plausible excuse;
If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay!
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.
O Italy!—Thy sabbaths will be soon
Our sabbaths, closed with mummery and buffoon.
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebanks between.
What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest.
Pastime and business, both it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude;
Nobly distinguished above all the six
By deeds in which the world must never mix.
Here him again. He calls it a delight,
A day of luxury observed aright,
When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest,
Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
But triflers are engaged and cannot come;
Their answer to the call is—Not at home.
O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!
Cards, with what rapture, and the polish'd die,
The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
Where Night, down stooping from her ebon throne,
Views constellations brighter than her own.
'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,
The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
Innocent! Oh, if venerable Time
Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
Then with his silver beard and magic wand,
Let Comus rise archbishop of the land;
Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.
Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule,
Not of the moral but the dancing school,
Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
As tragical as others at his own.
He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
Then kill a constable, and drink five more;
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
Go, fool; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
Your cause before a bar you little dread;
But know, the law that bids the drunkard die
Is far too just to pass the driller by.
Both baby-featured, and of infant size,
View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
Folly and innocence are so alike,
The difference, though essential, fails to strike.
Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
A simpering countenance, and a trifling air;
But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
Delights us, by engaging our respect.
Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
Receives from her both appetite and treat;
But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
His benefactress blushes at the deed.
For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare!
Heaven bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair.
Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan:
He snuffs far off the anticipated joy;
Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ;
Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
Oh, nauseous!—an emetic for a whet!
Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
Temperance were no virtue if he could.
That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
Are hurtful, is a truth confess'd by all.
And some, that seem to threaten virtue less
Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.
Is man then only for his torment placed
The centre of delights he may not taste?
Like fabled Tantalus, condemn'd to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,

Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition and perpetual thirst?
No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense,
The precept, that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In every bosom where her nest is made,
Hatch'd by the beams of truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
No pleasure? Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?
All these belong to virtue, and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity, that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart:
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure? Has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her sated and indifferent lord?
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees? And has religion none?
Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the stye.
Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begg'd, besought, to entertain;
Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough?
Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses at the close.
Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use;
Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart surrender'd to the ruling power
Of some ungovern'd passion every hour.
Finds by degrees the truths that once bore sway,
And all their deep impressions, wear away;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd,
Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last.
The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,
In rushes folly with a full-moon tide,
Then welcome errors, of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon;
So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are.
And lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth—
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race
To hide the shocking features of her face.
Her form with dress and lotion they repair;
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.
The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy;
A trifle, if it move but to amuse;
But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.
Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads;
Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
Snivelling and drivelling folly without end;
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
With sentimental trippery and dream,
Caught in a delicate soft silken net
By some lewd earl, or rake-hell baronet:
Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence,
Steal to the closet of young innocence,
And teach her, inexperienced yet and green,
To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen;
Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
With some cold moral think to quench the fire;
Though all your engineering proves in vain
The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again:
Oh that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away, these flesh-flies of the land,
Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
And suck, and leave a craving maggot there!
Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil;
Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.
But the muse, eagle-pinion'd, has in view
A quarry more important still than you:
Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.
Petronius! all the muses weep for thee;
But every tear shall scald thy memory:
The graces too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest
Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,
Graybeard corrupter of our listening youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That so refined it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son,
To taint his heart was worthy of thine own!
Now, while the poison all high life pervades
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet;
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That Education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong;
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong;
And without discipline the favorite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow:
We give some Latin and a smatch of Greek;
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week;
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.
From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home;
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,
With reverend tutor, clad in habit lay,
To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day;
With memorandum book for every town,
And every post, and where the chaise broke down;

His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
With much to learn, but nothing to impart;
The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.
Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,
With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare,
Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
And steeples towering high, much like our own;
But show peculiar light by many a grin
At popish practices observed within.

Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart abbé
Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way;
And, being always primed with politesse
For men of their appearance and address,
With much compassion undertakes the task
To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
Such as, when legible, were never read,
But being canker'd now and half worn out,
Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;
Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—
Defective only in his Roman nose;
Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
Models of Herculanum pots and pans;
And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care.

Strange the recital! from whatever cause
His great improvement and new lights he draws,
The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,
But teems with powers he never felt before;
Whether increased momentum, and the force
With which from clime to clime he sped his course,
(As axles sometimes kindle as they go,)
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow;
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially, and spread the man;
Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace,
By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
And wisdom falls before exterior grace:
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,
Are qualities that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend;
Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash;
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
Where children would with ease discern the way.
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warp'd from its intent.

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased
If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased;
But if the rogue be gone a cup too far,
Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
It suffers interruption and delay,
And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
When some hypothesis absurd and vain
Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain,
The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
The will made subject to a lawless force,
All is irregular, and out of course;
And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.

A critic on the sacred book should be
Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free;
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal;
But above all, (or let the wretch refrain,
Nor touch the page he cannot but profane,)
Free from the domineering power of lust;
A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?
By thee religion, liberty and laws,
Exert their influence and advance their cause;
By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,
Diffused, make Earth the vestibule of Hell;
Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies;
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee!

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest
Till half mankind were like himself possess'd.
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt;
Church quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind;
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound.
Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood, [food.
Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome
The propagated myriads spread so fast,
E'en Leuwenhoeck himself would stand aghast.
Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes;
And therefore prints: himself but half deceived,
Till others have the soothing tale believed.
Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line.
Hence the same word that bids our lusts obey
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend;
If languages and copies all cry, No—
Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there:
Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
The scholar's pitch, (the scholar best knows why,)
With all the simple and unletter'd poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore.
Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies! (for, indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause)
Whatever shocks or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)
Nor has, nor can have Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.

Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.
Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream;
And daily, more enamor'd of the cheat,
Kneels, and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit.
So one, whose story serves at least to show
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the gods had given it life.
If some mere driveller suck the sugar'd fib,
One that still needs his leading string and bib,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part—his head;
For 'tis a rule that holds forever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.
Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild;
Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke;
Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A mulcteer's the man to set him right.
First Appetite enlists him, Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.
Tell him he wanders; that his error lends
To fatal ills; that, though the path he treads
Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,
Death and the pains of hell attend him there:
In vain; the slave of arrogance and pride,
He has no hearing on the prudent side.
His still refuted quirks he still repeats;
New raised objections with new quibbles meets;
Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends—
But not the mischiefs; they, still left behind,
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.
Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill;
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will;
And, with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.
Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies,
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.
Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other's mint;
Each, sire and dam of an infernal race,
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.
None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.

For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing,
Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,
It err but little from the intended line,
It falls at last far wide of his design;
So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,
Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye;
That prize belongs to none but the sincere,
The least obliquity is fatal here.
With caution taste the sweet Circean cup;
He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
Habits are soon assumed; but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive.
Call'd to the temple of impure delight,
He that abstains, and he alone, does right.
If a wish wander that way, call it home;
He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
But if you pass the threshold, you are caught;
Die then, if power Almighty save you not.
There hardening by degrees, till double steel'd,
Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd;
Then laugh at all you trembled at before;
And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,
Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense.
If clemency revolted by abuse
Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.
Some dream that they can silence, when they will,
The storm of passion, and say, Peace, be still:
But "Thus far and no farther," when address'd
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought to be the lot of man.
But, muse, forbear; long flights forebode a fall;
Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.
Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies!
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss
Forever and forever? No—the cross!
There and there only (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if Earth bear so base a slave);
There and there only is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair;
No mockery meets you, no deception there,
The spells and charms, that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.
I am no preacher, let this hint suffice—
The cross once seen is death to every vice;
Else He that hung there suffer'd all his pain,
Bled, groan'd, and agonized, and died, in vain.

TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ. Hor. lib. ii. Ep. 1.

THE ARGUMENT.

The pursuit of error leads to destruction—Grace leads the right way—Its direction despised—The self-sufficient Pharisee compared with the peacock—The pheasant compared with the Christian—Heaven abhors affected sanctity—The hermit and his penances—The self-torturing Bramin—Pride the ruling principle of both—Picture of a sanctimonious prude—Picture of a saint—Freedom of a Christian—Importance of motives, illustrated by the conduct of two servants—The traveller overtaken by a storm likened to the sinner dreading the vengeance of the Almighty—Dangerous state of those who are just in their own conceit—The last moments of the infidel—Content of the ignorant but believing cottager—The rich, the wise, and the great, neglect the means of winning heaven—Poverty the best soil for religion—What man really is, and what in his own esteem—Unbelief often terminates in suicide—Scripture the only cure of woe—Pride the passion most hostile to truth—Danger of slighting the mery offered by the Gospel—Plea for the virtuous heathen—Commands given by God on Sinai—The judgment-day—Plea of the believer.

Man, on the dubious waves of error toss'd,
His ship half founder'd, and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land;
Spreads all his canvas, every sinew plies;
Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies!
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams;
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell!
He reads his sentence at the flames of hell.

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it! Wherefore hard?—
He that would win the race must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course;
Else, though unequall'd to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way; if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish; but restrain your tongue;
Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

Oh how unlike the complex works of man,
Heav'n's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;
From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
It stands like the cerulian arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickening words—BELIEVE, AND LIVE.
Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
Despise the plain direction, and are lost.
Heaven on such terms! (they cry with proud disdain)
Incredible, impossible, and vain!—
Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey;
And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.
These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
Some thought of immortality remains;
The rest too busy or too gay to wait
On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
Sport for a day, and perish in a night;
The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judged the Pharisee! What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
Had he seduc'd a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end?
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board?
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.)
No—the man's morals were exact. What then?
'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—
Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he!
Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold:
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step was govern'd by his ear;
And seems to say—Ye meaner fowl give place;
I am all splendor, dignity, and grace!

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he, too, has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse or far sequester'd green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain;
Not more affronted by avowed neglect,
Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise?
What—but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock;
Book, beads, and maple dish, his meagre stock;
In shirt of hair and weeds of canvas dress'd,
Girt with a bell-rope that the pope has bless'd;
Adust with stripes told out for every crime,
And sore tormented, long before his time;
His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid,
His praise postponed, and never to be paid;
See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,
With all that bigotry adopts inspired,
Wearing out life in his religious whim,
Till his religious whimsy wears out him.

His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
You think him humble—God accounts him proud.
High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
Have purchased heaven, and proved my title good.
Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply
To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
The bramin kindles on his own bare head
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade!
His voluntary pains, severe and long,
Would give a barbarous air to British song;
No grand inquisitor could worse invent,
Than he contrives to suffer well content.
Which is the saintlier worthy of the two?
Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you.
Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?
I say the bramin has the fairer claim.
If sufferings scripture nowhere recommends,
Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
Give saintship, then all Europe must agree
Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.
The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear)
Pride has attained a most luxuriant growth,
And poison'd every virtue in them both. [lean;
Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows
Humility may clothe an English dean;
That grace was Cowper's—his, confess'd by all—
Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,
His palace, and his lacqueys, and "My Lord,"
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice;
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows:
In misery fools upon themselves impose.
But why before us protestants produce
An Indian mystic or a French recluse?
Their sin is plain; but what have we to fear,
Reform'd and well-instructed? You shall hear.
Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
She might be young some forty years ago, [show
Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips.
Her eyebrows arched, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet head and mincing airs
Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels and dewdrop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.
She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.
Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth. [came,
Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he
Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name;
Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
And drank the little bumper every day.
Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
Censorious, and her every word a wasp;
In faithful memory she records the crimes
Or real, or fictitious, of the times;
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.
Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified:
Take, madam the reward of all your prayers.
Where hermits and where bramins meet with theirs,
Your portion is with them.—Nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.
Artist, attend—your brushes and your paint—
Produce them, take a chair—now draw a saint.
Oh sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears
Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears!
Is this a saint? Throw tints and all away—
True piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.
What purpose has the King of saints in view?
Why falls the gospel like a gracious dew?
To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
Or, if a chain, the golden one of love:
No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought.
His Master's interest and his own combined
Prompt every movement of his heart and mind:
Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.
Man's obligations infinite, of course
His life should prove that he perceives their force;
His utmost he can render is but small—
The principle and motive all in all.
You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,
Genteel in figure, easy in address,
Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
Expert in all the duties of his place;
Say, on what hinge does his obedience move?
Has he a world of gratitude and love?
No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play;
He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay;
Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with—Your most obedient, sir.
The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command;
Sighs, if perhaps your appetite should fail;
And, if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
Consults all day your interest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please;
And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
To save your life would nobly risk his own.
Now which stands highest in your serious thought?
Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought;
One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
Thus Heaven approves as honest and sincere
The work of generous love and filial fear;
But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge
Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.
Where dwell these matchless saints? old Curio cries.
E'en at your side, sir, and before your eyes,
The favor'd few—the enthusiasts you despise.

And, pleased at heart because on holy ground,
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
Attend! an apt similitude shall show
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.
See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again and faster to the ground;
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;
Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dress'd,
By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest;
Think with what pleasure, safe, and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees;
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger past is turn'd to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels:
His conscience like a glassy lake before,
Lash'd into foaming waves, begins to roar;
The law, grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong—
Asserts the right of his offended Lord,
And death, or restitution, is the word:
The last impossible, he fears the first,
And, having well deserved, expects the worst.
Then welcome refuge and a peaceful home;
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!
Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains, hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide!—
The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
I dare not—And you need not, God replies;
The remedy you want I freely give;
The book shall teach you—read, believe and live!
'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore:
And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise;
Hence the complexion of his future days,
Hence a demeanor holy and unspeck'd,
And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.
Some lead a life unblameable and just,
Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust:
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A slight gratuity atones for all.
For though the pope has lost his interest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
Mercy is infinite, and man is weak;
The future shall obliterate the past,
And heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.
Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
He has no hope who never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.
The path to bliss abounds with many a snare;
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
The Frenchman, first in literary fame, [same)
(Mention him, if you please. Voltaire?—The
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied, [died;
Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and
The Scripture was his jest book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew;
An infidel in health, but what when sick?
Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick;
View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere;
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed with frankincense on every side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And, smother'd in't at last, is praised to death!
Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store;
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise; but though her lot be such,
(Toilsome and indigent,) she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
Oh, happy peasant! Oh, unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home:
He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers.
Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science win one inch of heavenly ground.
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret;
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them
Not that the Former of us all in this, [there.
Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice;
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all:
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss, (how strange soe'er it seem,)
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why?
Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
Oh, bless'd effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head:
To them the sounding jargon of the schools
Seems what it is—a cap and bells for fools:
The light they walk by, kindled from above,
Shows them the shortest way to life and love:
They, strangers to the controversial field,
Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small:
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.
We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays;
Like gleanings of an olive tree, they show
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.
How readily, upon the Gospel plan,
That question has its answer—What is man?
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch;
An instrument, whose chords, upon the stretch,
And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear:
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
Where, in his own oracular abode,
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;
But made long since, like Babylon of old,
A den of mischiefs never to be told:
And she, once mistress of the realms around,
Now scattered wide and nowhere to be found,
As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,
By native power and energy her own,
As nature, at her own peculiar cost,
Restore to man the glories he has lost.
Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,
Replace the wandering comet in his sphere,
Then boast (but wait for that unhoped for hour)
The self-restoring arm of human power.
But what is man in his own proud esteem?
Hear him—himself the poet and the theme:
A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
His mind his kingdom, and his will his law;
Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God!
So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,
The song magnificent—the theme a worm!
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
His passions tamed and all at his control,
How perfect the composure of his soul!
Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail:
His books well trimm'd, and in the gayest style,
Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves:
The Bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care;
And, like an infant troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.
What shall the man deserve of human kind,
Whose happy skill and industry combined
Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
The Bible an imposture and a cheat?
The praises of the libertine profess'd,
The worst of men, and curses of the best.
Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes;
The dying, trembling at the awful close;
Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd;
The thousands whom the world forbids to rest;
Where should they find, (those comforts at an end,
The Scripture yields,) or hope to find, a friend?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Bury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.
The jury meet, the coroner is short,
And lunacy the verdict of the court.
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
Such lunacy is ignorance alone;
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
That Scripture is the only cure of woe.
That field of promise how it flings abroad
Its odor o'er the Christian's thorny road!
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labor as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.
But the same word, that, like the polish'd share,
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,
That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
Oh, that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
Sad messenger of mercy from above!
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear!
His will and judgment at continual strife,
That civil war embitters all his life;
In vain he points his powers against the skies,
In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware;
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.
Though various foes against the Truth combine,
Pride above all opposes her design;
Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.
And is the soul indeed so lost?—she cries,
Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise?
Torpid and dull, beneath a frozen zone,
Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own?
Grant her indebted to what zealots call
Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all!
Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
Some love of virtue, and some power to praise;
Can lift herself above corporeal things,
And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,
Possess herself of all that's good or true,
Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
Past indiscretion is a venial crime;
And if the youth, unmellowed yet by time,
Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
And meliorate the well-concocted juice.
Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,
To Justice she may make her bold appeal;
And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,
The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied,
Retorts the affront against the crown of pride.
Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.
The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn?
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift—
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
For ignorance of what they could not know?—
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong!
Truly, not I—the partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save;
While he that scorns the noon-day beam, perverse,
Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess, for me, their undisputed lot,
And take, unenvied, the reward they sought.
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Derived from the same source of light and grace,
That guides the Christian in his swifter race;
Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law:
That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,
Led them, however faltering, faint and slow,
From what they knew to what they wish'd to know.
But let not him that shares a brighter day
Traduce the splendor of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime;
The wretch, who slights the bounty of the skies,
And sinks, while favor'd with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount,
The good he scorn'd all carried to account.
Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,
From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law—
Life for obedience—death for every flaw.
When the great Sovereign would his will express,
He gives a perfect rule, what can he less?
And guards it with a sanction as severe
As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:
Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
And man might safely trifle with his name.
He bids them glow with unremitting love
To all on earth, and to himself above; [tongue,
Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous
The thought that meditates a brother's wrong:
Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.
Hark! universal nature shook and groan'd,
'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthron'd:
Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
What! silent? Is your boasting heard no more?
That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,
Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues cannot purchase now.
All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek. [foot
Since the dear hour that brought me to thy
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine:
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child!
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart:
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil and accept their good:
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon thee:
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.
Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
Dona sines? VIRG.

THE ARGUMENT.

Expostulation with the Muse weeping for England—Her apparently prosperous condition—State of Israel when the prophet wept over it—The Babylonian Captivity—When nations decline, the evil commences in the Church—State of the Jews in the time of our Saviour—Evidences of their having been the most favored of nations—Causes of their downfall—Lesson taught by it—Warning to Britain—The hand of Providence to be traced in adverse events—England's trangressions—Her vain-glory—Her conduct towards India—Abuse of the sacrament—Obduracy against repentance—Futility of fasts—Character of the Clergy—The poet adverts to the state of the ancient Britons—Beneficial influence of the Roman power—England under papal supremacy—Favors since bestowed on her by Providence—Reasons for gratitude to God and for seeking to secure his favor—With that she may defy a world in arms—The poet anticipates little effect from his warning.

WHY weeps the muse for England? What appears
In England's ease to move the muse to tears?
From side to side of her delightful isle
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer
A new-found luxury, not seen in her?
Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn,
Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn;
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
The fervor and the force of Indian skies:
Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates;
Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spiec
Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the World's girdle to the frozen pole;

The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets;
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports;
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again;
All speak her happy; let the muse look round
From East to West, no sorrow can be found;
Or only what, in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
Then wherefore weep for England? What appears
In England's case to move the muse to tears?
The prophet wept for Israel; wish'd his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies;
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong;
There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue;
Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,
As interest biass'd knaves, or fashion fools;
Adultery, neighing at his neighbor's door;
Oppression laboring hard to grind the poor;
The partial balance and deceitful weight;
The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate;
Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lip were there.
Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce;
Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground. [eye,
They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton
And sigh'd for every fool that flutter'd by.
He saw his people slaves to every lust,
Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust;
He heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road;
Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass
To let the military deluge pass;
Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,
Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd;
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh;
But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain,
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accustom'd to the pleasing lute:
They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,
Pronounc'd him frantic, and his fears a dream;
With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,
Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.
Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
Till penitence had purged the public stain,
And Cyrus with relenting pity moved,
Return'd them happy to the land they loved;
There, proof against prosperity, awhile
They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe.
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain;
And, after all the joys that Plenty leads,
With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds. [rod,
When he that ruled them with a shepherd's
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came, not expected in that humble guise,
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,
He found, conceal'd beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness and worm of pride;
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat;
The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.
When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins;
The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink;
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own:
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure;
And, tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot.
Then truth is hush'd, that Heresy may preach;
And all is trash that reason cannot reach;
Then God's own image on the soul impress'd
Becomes a mockery, and a standing jest;
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,
Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream:
Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth;
While truths, on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend:
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;
Happy to fill religion's vacant place;
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.
Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import of their oracles divine;
Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own word;
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
He judg'd them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down:
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs;
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man;
And tricks and turns that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
The astonish'd vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before;
He stripp'd the impostors in the noonday sun,
Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun;
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries He that dwelt in it disdain'd;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When obstinacy once has conquered grace.
They saw distemper heal'd, and life restor'd,
In answer to the fiat of his word;
Confessed the wonder, and with daring tongue
Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.
They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky;

But, grave dissemblers! could not understand
That sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.
Ask now of history's authentic page,
And call up evidence from every age;
Display with busy and laborious hand
The blessings of the most indebted land;
What nation will you find whose annals prove
So rich an interest in Almighty love?
Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
A people planted, water'd, blest as they?
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favors pour'd upon the Jewish name;
Their freedom purchased for them at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most:
Their title to a country not their own
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown;
For them the states they left made waste and void;
For them the states to which they went destroy'd;
A cloud to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way;
That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and, when it stay'd, to rest.
For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed into angelic food,
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And Time forbid to touch them as he flew;
Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand
While they pass'd through to their appointed land;
Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
And graced with clear credentials from above;
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing;
Their God their captain,* lawgiver, and king;
Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last
Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,
In peace possessing what they won by war,
Their name far publish'd, and revered as far;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
With all that man e'er wish'd, or Heaven bestow'd?
They, and they only, amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of the Eternal Mind:
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious, yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine and skill that could not err.
Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome;
And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol god within;
View'd a Deliverer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state;
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree:
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown;
Thence date their sad declension, and their fall,
Their woes, not yet repeal'd, thence date them
Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favor'd land, look where we may.

* Vide Josh. v. 14.

Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies;
In other climes perhaps creative art,
With power surpassing theirs, perform'd her part;
Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill,
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
With all the embroidery of poetic dreams;
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
That truth and mercy had reveal'd to man;
And, while the world beside, that plan unknown
Deified useless wood or senseless stone,
They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,
And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.
Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first,
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn—
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn:
If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
Peel'd, scatter'd and exterminated thus;
If vice received her retribution due,
When we were visited, what hope for you?
When God arises with an awful frown,
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down;
When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,
Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand,
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land:
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.
Oh Israel, of all nations most undone!
Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone;
Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst;
Thy services, once holy without spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er every country sown,
With none on earth that thou canst call thine
Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust, own;
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust;
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears;
Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears;
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.
What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none;
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
None interposes now to succor thee.
Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
With light derived from thee, would smother thine.
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face.
Thy rulers load thy credit year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear;
As if, like arches built with skilful hand
The more 'twere press'd, the firmer it would stand.
The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
Speed us away to battle and to fame.
Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France:
But, though they fight, as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war;
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment and fight;

Where obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what policy has plann'd;
Where policy is busied all night long
In setting right what faction has set wrong;
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor, [more.
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing
Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
Tax'd till the brow of labor sweats in vain;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.
Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
Providence adverse in events like these?
Know then that heavenly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all;
That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine:
Blind to the working of that secret power,
That balances the wings of every hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither, as moons wax and wane,
E'en as his will and his decrees ordain;
While honor, virtue, piety bear sway,
They flourish; and, as these decline, decay:
In just resentment of his injured laws,
He pours contempt on them and on their cause;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart;
Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what he wrought,
None bars him out from his most secret thought;
Darkness itself before his eye is light,
And hell's close mischief naked in his sight.
Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurr'd
His anger who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,
And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars?
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
Of his just praise to lavish it on them?
Hast thou not learn'd what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
That no success attends on spears and swords
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?
That courage is his creature; and dismay
The post, that at his bidding speeds away,
Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
With doleful rumor and sad presage hung,
To quell the valor of the stoutest heart,
And teach the combatant a woman's part?
That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,
Saves as he will by many or by few,
And claims forever, as his royal right,
The event and sure decision of the fight?
Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's breast,
Exported slavery to the conquer'd East?
Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself a greater in their stead?
Gone thither, arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power, obtain'd by wealth,
And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind? [fee,
And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?
Hast thou by statute shoved from its design,
The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office-key, a picklock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write;
And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within?
Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,
And, long-provoked, repaid thee to thy face,
(For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
When sin has shed dishonor on thy brow;
And never of a sabler hue than now,) [sear'd,
Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience
Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
And having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
That cried, Repent!—and gloried in thy choice?
Thy fastings, when calamity at last
Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast, [power
What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a
In lighter dict at a later hour,
To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,
And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends
The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw
Thy life upon the pattern of the law;
To war with pleasure, idolized before;
To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.
Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time
Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace,
Baboons are free from, upon human race!
Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
Where Paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth,
Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth,
Or, in his words who damn'd the base desire,
Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:
Then nature, injured, scandalized, defiled,
Unveil'd her blushing cheek, looked on, and smiled;
Beheld with joy the lovely scene defac'd, [waste.
And praised the wrath that laid her beauties
Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
And farther still the form'd and fix'd design,
To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest
Against an innocent, unconscious breast;
The man that dares traduce, because he can
With safety to himself, is not a man:
An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark;
But public censure speaks a public foe,
Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-interest, and ambition clear,
Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love.
As meek as the man Moses, and withal
As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
Holy and unpolluted :—are thine such ?
Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.
Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
For ears and hearts that he can hope to please ?
Look to the poor, the simple and the plain
Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain :
Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
Speak but the word, will listen and return.
Alas, not so ! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock ;
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
Are more intelligent, at least—try them.
Oh vain inquiry ! they without remorse
Are altogether gone a devious course ; [stray ;
Where beckoning pleasure leads them, wildly
Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.
Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
Review thy dim original and prime.
This island, spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd ;
For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a grovelling, puling chit,
Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now.
His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqueror owes ;
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind ;
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame ;
Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,
And grac'd thy figure with a soldier's pride ;
He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,
Improv'd thee far beyond his own intent,
And, while he ruled thee by his sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired ;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight ;
Thy druids struck the well-hung harps they bore
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore ;
And while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.
Who brought the lamp that with awaking beams
Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :
But still light reach'd thee; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
Fell broken and defaced at their own door,
As Dagon in Philistia long before.

But Rome with sorceries and magic wand
Soon raised a cloud that darken'd every land ;
And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog
Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog. [crowns,
Then priests with bulls and briefs, and shaven
And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
Legates and delegates with powers from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well ;
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.*
Thy soldiery, the pope's well managed pack,
Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
His worthless absolution all the prize.
Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore
That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar ;
Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress
Found thee a goodly spunge for power to press.
Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
Provoked and harass'd, in return plagued thee ;
Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,
Domestic happiness and rural joy,
To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
Thy parliaments adored, on bended knees,
The sovereignty they were convened to please ;
Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist,
Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd ;
And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,
And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
He was a traitor by the general voice.
Oh slave ! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert ;
It shakes the sides of splenetic disdain,
Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
To trace thee to the date, when yon fair sea,
That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee ;
When other nations flew from coast to coast,
And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust ;
Blush if thou canst ; not petrified, thou must ;
Act but an honest and a faithful part ; [art ;
Compare what then thou wast with what thou
And God's disposing providence confess'd,
Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—
Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove,
Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.
Has he not hid thee and thy favor'd land,
For ages, safe beneath his sheltering hand,
Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,
And charged hostility and hate to roar
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore ?
His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
Baptized her fleet invincible in vain ;
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resign'd
To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast,
What tidings ? and the surge replied—All lost !
And when the Stuart, leaning on the Scot,
Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot,

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

Pierced to the very centre of the realm,
And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown,
He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down.
Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd,
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
While his own heaven surveys the troubled scene,
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
Pours out a flood of splendor upon thine;
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
True freedom is where no restraint is known
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown;
Where only vice and injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free beside.
Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,
That won a nymph on that immortal plain,
Like her the fabled Phœbus wooed in vain:
He found the laurel only—happier you
The unfading laurel, and the virgin too!*
Now think, if pleasure have a thought to spare;
If God himself be not beneath her care;
If business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme;
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next, give leave;
Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heavenly truth have swell'd the debt.
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoyed the show, and danced about the stake,
The sacred book, its value understood,
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a different race,
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
In such a cause they could not dare to fear;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Or spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee conveyed along the tide,
Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they died;
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
What dotage will not vanity maintain?
What web too weak to catch a modern brain?
The moles and bats in full assembly find,
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now?
Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
Ere nature rose from her eternal sleep,
And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High;
By such a change thy darkness is made light,
Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might;
And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,
Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for his praise.
To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
Doing and suffering, his unquestioned will;
'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,
Faithful, and faithfully informed, unfold;
Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
To take for truth what cannot but be true;
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
And bind the task assigned thee to thine heart:
Happy the man there seeking and there found;
Happy the nation where such men abound!
How shall a verse impress thee? by what name
Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
By theirs whose bright example, unimpeached,
Directs thee to that eminence they reached,
Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?
Or his, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires?
Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age,
Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage;
And his, that seraphs tremble at, is hung
Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,
Or serves the champion in forensic war
To flourish and parade with at the bar.
Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee;
By every charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possess'd and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
Held by the tenure of his will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word;
That gratitude, and temperance in our use
Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favor, and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
Those rights, that millions envy thee, appear,
And though resolved to risk them, and swim down
The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when given
Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
Which make that heaven if thou desire it, thine,
(Awful alternative! believed, beloved,
Thy glory and thy shame if unimproved,)
Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside
With cold disgust or philosophic pride;
And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error and darkness, occupy their place.
A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
Not quickly found, if negligently sought,
Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
Endur'st the brunt, and dar'st defy them all;
And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
A bolder still, a contest with the skies?
Remember, if He guard thee and secure,
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure;
But if He leave thee, though the skill and pow'r
Of nations, sworn to spoil thee and devour,
Were all collected in thy single arm,
And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,
That strength would fail, opposed against the push
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.
Say not (and if the thought of such defence
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede near Windsor.

What nation amongst all my foes is free
From crimes as base as any charged on me?
Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt,
Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.
But know that wrath divine, when most severe,
Makes justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.
Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
And, while at intervals a cold blast sings
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
I know the warning song is sung in vain;
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain;
But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd
A blessing to my country and mankind,
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home
A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam,
Then place it once again between my knees;
The sound of truth will then be sure to please;
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

HOPE.

. . . . . doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.
VIRG. Æn. 6.

THE ARGUMENT.

Human Life—The charms of Nature remain the same though they appear different in youth and age—Frivolity of fashionable life—Value of life—The works of the Creator evidences of his attributes—Nature the handmaid to the purposes of grace—Character of Hope—Man naturally stubborn and intractable—His conduct in different stations—Death's honors—Each man's belief right in his own eyes—Simile of Ethelred's hospitality—Mankind quarrel with the Giver of eternal life, on account of the terms on which it is offered—Opinions on this subject—Spread of the Gospel—The Greenland Missions—Contrast of the unconverted and converted heathen—Character of Leuconomus—The man of pleasure the blindest of bigots—Any hope preferred to that required by the Scripture—Human nature opposed to Truth—Apostrophe to Truth—Picture of one conscience-smitten—The pardoned sinner—Conclusion.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,
Closing at last in darkness and despair.
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
As in a dance the pair that take the lead
Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
So shifting and so various is the plan
By which Heaven rules the mix'd affairs of man;
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud;
Business is labor, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labor too, and tires as much;
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition pall'd by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore, [store;
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs re-
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet to few to make us wise.
Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff—
O querulous and weak!—whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain;
Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste;
Would age in thee resign his wint'ry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.
For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See nature gay, as when she first began
With smiles alluring her admirer man;
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils;
The sun, obedient, at her call appears
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears;
Banks clothed with flowers, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds, [grounds,
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising
Streams, edged with osiers, fattening every field
Where'er they flow, now seen and now conceal'd;
From the blue rim, where skies and mountains
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet [meet,
Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,
Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice!
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires;
Not that, his hours devoted all to care,
Hollow-eyed abstinence, and lean despair, [sight.
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste,
She holds a paradise of rich delight;
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives she gives sincere,
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness her dear, her only, aim.
'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream, [seem,
That Heaven's intentions are not what they

That only shadows are dispensed below,
And earth has no reality but woe.
Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
As youth or age persuades; and neither true.
So, Flora's wreath through color'd crystal seen,
The rose or lily appears blue or green,
But still the imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.
To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best.
Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four:
And, just when evening turns the blue vault gray,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day;
To make the sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce;
Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not;
Through mere necessity to close his eyes
Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise;
Is such a life, so tediously the same,
So void of all utility or aim,
That poor Jonquil, with almost every breath,
Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death:
For he, with all his follies, has a mind
Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
Of distant wisdom shoots across his way;
By which he reads, that life without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in; an incumbrance ere half spent.
Oh! weariness beyond what asses feel,
That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel;
A dull rotation, never at a stay,
Yesterday's face twin image of to-day;
While conversation, an exhausted stock,
Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out
With academic dignity devout,
To read wise lectures, vanity the text:
Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next;
For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd,
Is vanity surpassing all the rest.
That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
While passion turns aside from its due scope
The inquirer's aim, that remedy is Hope.
Life is his gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
With every good and perfect gift, proceeds;
Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,
Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake;
Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
And yet the seed of an immortal flower;
Design'd, in honor of his endless love,
To fill with fragrance his abode above;
No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
And, howsoever shadowy, no dream;
Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.
Men deal with life as children with their play,
Who first misuse, then cast their toys away;
Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must, of course, ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above;
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employ'd in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace;
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood:
That bliss, reveal'd in scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.
Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with chemic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wings sails through the immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor, firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.
Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights, in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land,
That boasts the treasure, all at his command;
The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,
Were light, when weigh'd against one smile of thine.
Though clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms
He shines with all a cherub's artless charms,
Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt;
His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
The free republic of the whip-gig state.
If one his equal in athletic frame,
Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
Dare step across his arbitrary views,
An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues:
The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
Till the best tongue or heaviest hand prevails.
Now see him launch'd into the world at large;
If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.
If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,
But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.
Perhaps a grave physican, gathering fees,
Punctually paid for lengthening out disease;
No Cotton, whose humanity sheds rays,
That make superior skill his second praise.
If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
His date of life so likely to be short;

A soldier may be anything if brave,
So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
Such stuff the world is made of; and mankind,
To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resign'd,
Insist on, as if each were his own pope,
Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope;
But conscience, in some awful silent hour,
When captivating lusts have lost their power,
Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
Reminds him of religion, hated theme!
Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept;
Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
And life abused, and not to be suborn'd.
Mark these, she says; these, summon'd from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar;
There find a Judge inexorably just,
And perish there as all presumption must.
Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live;
Born capable indeed of heavenly truth;
But down to latest age, from earliest youth,
Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
The plough of wisdom never entering there.
Peace (if insensibility may claim
A right to the meek honors of her name)
To men of pedigree, their noble race,
Emulous always of the nearest place
To any throne, except the throne of grace.
Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains;
Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there.
Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
May now and then their velvet cushions take,
And seem to pray for good example sake;
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
Pious enough, and having need of none.
Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize
What they themselves, without remorse, despise:
Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come,
As well for them had prophecy been dumb;
They could have held the conduct they pursue,
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew;
And truth proposed to reasoners wise as they,
Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.
They die.—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport,
All the grim honors of his ghastly court.
Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow:
The busy heralds hang the sable scene
With mournful 'scutcheons, and dim lamps between;
Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
But they that wore them move not at the sound;
The coronet, placed idly at their head,
Adds nothing now to the degraded dead,
And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,
Can only say—Nobility lies here.
Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend,
By useless censure, whom we cannot mend;
Life without hope can close but in despair,
'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.

As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
Both may be lost, yet each in his own way;
So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
In vain opinion's waste and dangerous wild;
Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,
Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
And he that blames what they have blindly chose
Incurs resentment for the love he shows.
Say, botanist, within whose province fall
The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?
Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
Distinguish every cultivated kind;
The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
If wild in nature, and not duly found,
Gethsemane! in thy dear hallow'd ground,
That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds, [weeds.
(Oh cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant
Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none,
But guests that sought it in the appointed One;
And they might enter at his open door,
E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road,
To sound his horn and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high and low—
An ordnance it concern'd them much to know.
If, after all, some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
No! the decree was just and without flaw;
And he that made had right to make the law;
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrain'd,
The wrong was his who wrongfully complain'd.
Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With him the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, Do this, and live.
Love is not pedlar's trumpery, bought and sold;
He will give freely, or he will withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not;
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can; for this plain cause, express'd
In terms as plain—himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased heaven create!
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.

From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound;
And beaus, adepts in everything profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
Such is the clamor of rooks, daws, and kites,
The explosion of the levell'd tube excites, [glade,
Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade,
The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
And seem to warn him never to repeat
His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.
Adieu, Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
Adieu to all morality! if grace
Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!—
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
With nice attention in a righteous scale,
And save or damn as these or those prevail.
I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
And silence every fear with—God is just.
But if perchance, on some dull drizzling day,
A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
If thus the important cause is to be tried,
Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side;
I soon recover from these needless frights,
And—God is merciful—sets all to rights.
Thus between justice, as my prime support,
And mercy, fled to as the last resort,
I glide and steal along with heaven in view,
And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.
I never will believe, the Colonel cries,
The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
Who make the good Creator, on their plan,
A being of less equity than man.
If appetite, or what divines call lust,
Which men comply with, e'en because they must,
Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure?
Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
If sentence of eternal pain belong
To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
My creed, (whatever some creed-makers mean
By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene.)
My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.
Right, says an ensign; and for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree;
The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there.
Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least.
A soldier's best is courage in the field.
With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd;
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay;
A hand as liberal as the light of day.
The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug, he cries, (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug
How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug.)
Your office is to winnow false from true; [you?
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, What think
Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment, rarely pass,
Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,
Is still found fallible, however wise;
And differing judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read,
Of critics now alive or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charm'd me most
Was,—well-a-day, the title-page was lost;
The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,
To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,
I superadd a few essentials more;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I waive just now, for conversation's sake.
Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim, [name.
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honor'd
And yet our lot is given us in a land
Where busy arts are never at a stand;
Where science points her telescopic eye,
Familiar with the wonders of the sky;
Where bold inquiry, diving out of sight,
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light;
Where nought eludes the persevering quest,
That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.
But, above all, in her own light array'd,
See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd!
The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue;
But speaks with plainness art could never mend,
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound;
That sound bespeaks salvation on her way;
The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her sons* to pour it on the farthest north:
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigor of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
On icy plains, and in eternal snows.
O blest within the inclosure of your rocks,
Not herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks;
Nor fertilizing streams your fields divide,
That show, reversed, the villas on their side;
No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
Or voice of turtle, in your land is heard;
Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell;
But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,
Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;
Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
And bids the mountains he has built stand fast;
Beckons the legions of his storms away
From happier scenes to make your land a prey;
Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
—Yet truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle!
And peace the genuine offspring of her smile;
The pride of letter'd ignorance that binds
In chains of error our accomplish'd minds,
That decks, with all the splendor of the true,
A false religion, is unknown to you.

* The Moravian missionaries in Greenland.—See Krantz.

Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night;
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here;
But brighter beams than his who fires the skies
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
From which our nicer optics turn away.
Here see the encouragement grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of mercy without price! [art,
What were they? what some fools are made by
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.
Not e'en the glorious sun, though men revere
The monarch most that seldom will appear,
And though his beams, that quicken where they shine,
May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,
Not e'en the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;
They were, what base credulity believes [thieves.
True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards,
The full gorged savage, at his nauseous feast
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,
Was one, whom justice, on an equal plan,
Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might almost have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.
What are they now?—Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there;
The wretch, who once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd,
And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays,
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.
Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,
And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.
Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand,
If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one whose birth was in a land of light,
Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.
These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if nature there, void of all good,
Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood,
(Yet charge not heavenly skill with having plann'd
A plaything world, unworthy of his hand;)
Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works;
Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
Hard task indeed o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is hope exotic? grows it not at home?
Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride, and moves our envy, less.
Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age;
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For every dart that malice ever shot.
The man that mention'd him at once dismiss'd
All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd:
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense;
A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule;
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd;
Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.
Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride,
Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He lov'd the world that hated him; the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere;
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life;
And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.
He followed Paul; his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same.
Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he labor'd, and like him content
To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.
Blush, calumny! and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies, [skies;
Which, aim'd at him, have pierced the offended
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,
Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord!
No blinder bigot, I maintain it still, [will:
Than he who must have pleasure, come what
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw;
Scripture indeed is plain; but God and he
On scripture ground are sure to disagree;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than this his Maker has seen fit to give;
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain;
Contrived to suit frail nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
By this, with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zig-zag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
His well-poised estimate of right and wrong;
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.
Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground you please;
Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
If not that hope the scripture has required.
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
With which hypocrisy forever teems,
(Though other follies strike the public eye,
And raise a laugh) pass unmolested by;
But if, unblameable in word and thought,
A MAN arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,

To storm the citadels they build in air, [spare;
And smite the untemper'd wall 'tis death to
To sweep away all refuges of lies,
And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
LAMA SABACTHANI before their eyes,
To prove that without Christ all gain is loss,
All hope despair, that stands not on his cross;
Except the few his God may have impress'd,
A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest. [lenst,
Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at
There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.
Nature opposes, with her utmost force,
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce:
And, while Religion seems to be her view,
Hates with a deep sincerity the true:
For this, of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
But makes him, if at all, completely free;
Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
Of an eternal, universal war;
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles;
Drives through the realms of sin, where riot reels,
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
Insensible of truth's almighty charms,
Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
While Bigotry, with well dissembled fears,
His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
Mighty to parry and push by God's word
With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.
Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known
Thy deathless wreaths and triumphs all thine own:
The silent progress of thy power is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.
Oh see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand!
That, while I trembling trace a work divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light and shade, and every stroke, be thine.
If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever when he sighed hast sighed again,
If ever on thy eyelid stood the tear
That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
This man was happy—had the world's good word,
And with it every joy it can afford;
Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;
Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilette of the fair
He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there,
Or, if in masculine debate he shared,
Ensured him mute attention and regard.
Alas, how changed! Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined;
Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin, [in;
Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works with-
That conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart!
Forsaking and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends;
Hard task! for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair!
His hours no longer pass unmarked away,
A dark importance saddens every day;
He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd
And cries, Perhaps eternity strikes next!
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear:
His grief the world of all her power disarms;
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms:
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.
Now let the bright reverse be known abroad;
Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.
As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
Expects, in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his misspent years;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play,
The thunder seems to summon him away;
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear;
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis heaven, all heaven, descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
O welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are call'd to employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy;
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams must join him in his praise.
These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth;
These move the censure and illiberal grin
Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin:
But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole,
And heav'n is all departed as a scroll.
And when, as justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.
Happy the bard (if that fair name belong
To him that blends no fable with his song)
Whose lines, uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And, while they captivate inform the mind:

Still happier, if he till a thankful soil.
And fruit reward his honorable toil:
But happier far, who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate:
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek;
Nor labor they, nor time, nor talents, waste,
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste;
But, while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
The abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work—the gleaning only mine.

CHARITY.

Qua nihil majus meliusve terris
Fata donavêre, bonique divi;
Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum
Tempora priscum.
HOR. lib. iv. Ode 2.

THE ARGUMENT.

Invocation to Charity—Social ties—Tribute to the humanity of Captain Cook—His character contrasted with that of Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico—Degradation of Spain—Purpose of commerce—Gifts of art—The slave-trade and slavery—Slavery unnatural and unchristian—The duty of abating the woes of that state, and of enlightening the mind of the slave, enforced—Apostrophe to Liberty—Charity of Howard—Pursuits of philosophy—Reason learns nothing aright without the lamp of Revelation—True charity the offspring of divine truth—Supposed case of a blind nation and an optician—Portrait of Charity—Beauty of the Apostle's definition of it—Alms as the means of lulling conscience—Pride and ostentation motives of charity—Character of satire—True charity inculcated—Christian charity should be universal—Happy effects that would result from universal charity.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
On man's most dignified and happiest state,
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above,
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
A task I venture on, impell'd by thee:
Oh never seen but in thy blest effects,
Or felt but in the soul that heaven selects;
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.
God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man:
He made at first, though free and unconfined,
One man the common father of the kind;
That every tribe, though placed as he sees best,
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
Differing in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust—
Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own,
Wherever he found man to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view:
He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
The simple native of the new-found isle;
He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
The tender argument of kindred blood;
Nor would endure that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.
But, though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved! [then,
Where wast thou then, sweet Charity? where
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground?
No.—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love; and Heaven abhors the fee.
Wherever found, (and all men need thy care,)
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
The hand that slew till it could slay no more
Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.
Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip on his own,
Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,
Died, by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways!
God stood not, though he seem'd to stand, aloof;
And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof;
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starved by that indolence their mines create.
Oh could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!
Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou, that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest
To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Roll'd over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown?

The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.
'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And vengeance executes what justice wills.
Again—the band of commerce was designed
To associate all the branches of mankind;
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes:
Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the general use;
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else a universal shade,
Calls nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men.
Ingenious Art with her expressive face,
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race;
Not only fills necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand:
Capricious taste itself can crave no more
Than she supplies from her abounding store:
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
And gains new vigor at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre;
From her the canvas borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
And pours a torrent of sweet notes around
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.
These are the gifts of art; and art thrives most
Where Commerce has enrich'd the busy coast;
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well,
And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
'Tis thus, reciprocating each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach;
While Providence enjoins to every soul
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.
Heaven speed the canvas, gallantly unfurl'd
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit the unsocial climates into one.
Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet whose errand is to save,
To succor wasted regions and replace
The smile of opulence in sorrow's face.
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India Nature's rarest birth,
That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love to pagan lands!
But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge, and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves, and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far-receding shore. [more;
But not the thought that they must meet no
Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego?
Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
He feels his body's bondage in his mind;
Puts off his generous nature, and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
Oh most degrading of all ills that wait
On man, a mourner in his best estate!
All other sorrows virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure;
Grief is itself a medicine, and bestow'd
To improve the fortitude that bears the load;
To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace;
But slavery—Virtue dreads it as her grave:
Patience itself is meanness in a slave;
Or, if the will and sovereignty of God
Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
That has a heart and life in it, Be free!
The beasts are charter'd—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
He breaks the cord that held him at the rack;
And, conscious of an unincumber'd back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein;
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane;
Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs;
Nor stops, till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.
Canst thou, and honor'd with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold:
So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside;
Not he, but his emergence forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.
Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,
Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd?
Impudent blasphemy! So folly pleads,
And, avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.
But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he must;
Still there is room for pity to abate
And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And love divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch that works and weeps without relief
Has One that notices his silent grief.
He, from whose hand alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown,
But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone!—the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurped command.
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod,
To smite the poor is treason against God!
Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd:
We wander o'er a sun-burnt thirsty soil,
Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,

Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offered shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighboring glade;
Else who would lose, that had the power to im-
The occasion of transmuting fear to love? [prove
Oh 'tis a godlike privilege to save!
And he that scorns it is himself a slave.
Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,
And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.
Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While gratitude and love made service sweet,
My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged, and ignorance made fast, the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;
Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
Serving a benefactor, I am free;
At my best home, if not exiled from thee. [ceeds
Some men make gain a fountain whence pro-
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for his paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all;
God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ;
And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.
Oh could I worship aught beneath the skies
That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.
Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of morning shed a dawning light,
Again, when evening in her sober vest
Drew the grey curtain of the fading west, [praise
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and
For the chief blessings of my fairest days:
But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine:
Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
A captive bird into the boundless sky,
This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
We feel thy force still active, at this hour
Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
While conscience, happier than in ancient years,
Owns no superior but the God she fears.
Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong
Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long.
Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share
The fears and hopes of a commercial care.
Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt;
But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood;
And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound.
Let just restraint, for public peace design'd,
Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind;
The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
But let insolvent innocence go free.
Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;
Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed;
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.
Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe, [home,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach;
That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage;
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
Oh that the voice of clamor and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hush'd in favor of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee!
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with nature all his way;
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep inquiry recommends.
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control,
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings at his return a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan,
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new;
He too has a connecting power, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious, if not all divine;
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.
He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range;
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the general scale.
But reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought;
The lamp of revelation only shows,
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,
And graced with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride,
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
Unless the power that bade him stand restore.
This is indeed philosophy; this known
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own;
And without this, whatever he discuss;
Whether the space between the stars and us;
Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea;
The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still:
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
Self-knowledge truly learned of course implies
The rich possession of a nobler prize;
For self to self, and God to man, reveal'd,
(Two themes to nature's eye forever seal'd,)
Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace
From the same centre of enlightening grace.

Here stay thy foot; how copious, and how clear,
The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!
Hark! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills.
Winding a secret or an open course,
And all supplied from an eternal source.
The ties of nature do but feebly bind.
And commerce partially reclaims mankind;
Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride;
But, while his province is the reasoning part,
Has still a veil of midnight on his heart:
'Tis truth divine exhibited on earth,
Gives Charity her being and her birth. [flows,
Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy
What will not argument sometimes suppose?)
An isle possessed by creatures of our kind,
Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
Let supposition lend her aid once more,
And land some grave optician on the shore:
He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
Close to the part where vision ought to be;
But finds that, though his tubes assist the sight,
They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
A sense they know not to the wondering crowd;
He talks of light and the prismatic hues,
As men of depth in erudition use;
But all he gains for his harangue is—Well,——
What monstrous lies some travellers will tell!
The soul, whose sight all-quickening grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As diamonds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noon-day glory of the skies.
She speaks of Him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires;
And, in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feels her flowing joys;
Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long;
And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence.
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream!
The danger they discern not they deny;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child:
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast.
The worst suggested she believes the best;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased;
She rather waives than will dispute her right;
And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.
Such was the portrait an apostle drew,
The bright original was one he knew;
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvas furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.
Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
To lull the painful malady with alms;
But charity not feign'd intends alone
Another's good—theirs centres in their own;
And, too short-lived to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease forever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of her sister's fame:
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But, if she touch a character, it dies.
The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price:
No charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantle-tree
How many deeds, with which the world has rung,
From pride, in league with ignorance, have sprung!
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to his will
A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food:
Extravagance and avarice shall subscribe,
While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.
The brief proclaim'd, it visits every pew,
But first the squire's, a compliment but due:
With slow deliberation he unties
His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes!
And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm;
Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
Gold, to be sure!—Throughout the town 'tis told
How the good squire gives never less than gold.
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distress'd;
Not less effectual than what love bestows,
Except that office clips it as it goes.
But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against love divine,)
Once more I would adopt the graver style,
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame:
He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare;
Affects indeed a most humane concern,
That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn;
That mulish folly, not to be reclaim'd
By softer methods, must be made ashamed;
But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
Most satirists are indeed a public scourge;
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge;

Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,
The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
No skill in swordmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust;
And even virtue, so unfairly match'd,
Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd.
When scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or taxed invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis called a satire, and the world appears
Gathering around it with erected ears:
A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd:
Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud,
Just as the sapience of an author's brain
Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.
Strange! how the frequent interjected dash
Quickens a market, and helps off the trash;
The important letters that include the rest
Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd;
Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
The world is charm'd, and Scrib escapes the law.
So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
Worms may be caught by either head or tail;
Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
They meet with little pity, no redress;
Plung'd in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,
Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence
To peace and charity, is mere pretence:
A bold remark; but which, if well applied,
Would humble many a towering poet's pride.
Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
And had no other play-place for his wit;
Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,
He sought the jewel in his neighbor's shame;
Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
The cause of virtue could not be his view.
At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes,
The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,
But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
That, while they please, possess us with alarms;
So have I seen, (and hasten'd to the sight
On all the wings of holiday delight,)
Where stands that monument of ancient power,
Named with emphatic dignity, the Tower, [small,
Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and
In starry forms disposed upon the wall:
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show;
But, though we praise the exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day,
When all disguises shall be rent away,
That square not truly with the scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
As he ordains things sordid in their birth
To be resolved into their parent earth;
And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs;
So self starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal, where it began the race.
Such as our motive is our aim must be;
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free:
If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought.
We glorify that self, not Him we ought;
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.
True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green;
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at Him, who form'd us and redeem'd,
So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd;
To see a God stretch forth his human hand,
To uphold the boundless scenes of his command;
To recollect that, in a form like ours,
He bruised beneath his feet the infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath he won so dearly in our name;
That, throned above all height, he condescends
To call the few that trust in him his friends;
That, in the heaven of heavens, that space he deems
Too scanty for the exertion of his beams,
And shines, as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like him the soul, thus kindled from above
Spreads wide her arms of universal love;
And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian!—and without the fires
The Founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat!
Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;
Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease;
And e'en the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace:
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep,
Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep:
His budget, often fill'd, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Or scare the nation with its big contents:
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learned disputants would take the field,
Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield;
Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love;
And I might spare myself the pains to show
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.

Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
The attention pleasure has so much engross'd.
But if unhappily deceived I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

CONVERSATION.

Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.
VIRG. Ecl. 5.

THE ARGUMENT.

In conversation much depends on culture—Its results frequently insignificant—Indecent language and oaths reprobated—The author's dislike of the clash of arguments—The noisy wrangler—Dubius an example of indecision—The positive pronounce without hesitation—The point of honor condemned—Duelling with fists instead of weapons proposed—Effect of long tales—The retailer of prodigies and lies—Qualities of a judicious tale—Smoking condemned—The emphatic speaker—The perfumed beau—The grave coxcomb—Sickness made a topic of conversation—Picture of a fretful temper—The bashful speaker—An English company—The sportsman—Influence of fashion on conversation—Converse of the two disciples going to Emmaus—Delights of religious conversation—Age mellows the speech—True piety often branded as fanatic frenzy—Pleasure of communion with the good—Conversation should be unconstrained—Persons who make the Bible their companion, charged with hypocrisy by the world—The charge repelled—The poet sarcastically surmises that his censure of the world may proceed from ignorance of its reformed manners—An apology for digression—Religion purifies and enriches conversation.

THOUGH nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And Conversation in its better part
May be esteem'd a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learn'd by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;
Not more distinct from harmony divine,
The constant creaking of a country sign.
As alphabets in ivory employ,
Hour after hour, the yet unletter'd boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science call'd his A B C;
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And if it weigh the importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought!
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonor or defile the tongue;
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market-price;
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.
There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb:
His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure, and receive their due.
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up every satyr in his den.
Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
Infectious as impure, your blighting power
Taints in its rudiments the promised flower;
Its odor perish'd and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for its smells of you.
Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable or just
For making speech the pamperer of lust;
But when the breath of age commits the fault
'Tis nauseous as the vapor of a vault.
So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful, and no longer green;
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.
Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
Some men have surely then a peaceful life!
Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vestris, or the naval force,
Asseveration blustering in your face
Makes contradiction such a hopeless case:
In every tale they tell, or false or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forced into the brain;
And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With adjurations every word impress,
Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;
Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begg'd an interest in his frequent prayers.
Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
Henceforth associate in one common herd;
Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
Pronounce your human form a false pretence:
A mere disguise in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.
Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,

Decide no question with their tedious length.
For opposition gives opinion strength,
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably disposed to death.
O thwart me not, Sir Soph. at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame;
No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground;
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated—No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark, at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain.
Your thread of argument is snapp'd again;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right,
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt!

Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
Yes—you may catch him tripping if you can.
He would not, with a peremptory tone,
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
His evidence, if he were call'd by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
Knows what he knows as if he knew it not;
What he remembers seems to have forgot;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centring at last in having none at all.
Yet, though he tease, and balk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool;
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach,
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.

Where men of judgment creep and feel their way;
The positive pronounce without dismay;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong.
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump:
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn;
And, though self-idolised in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.

The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride.
Few competitions but engender spite;
And those the most, where neither has a right.

The point of honor has been deem'd of use,
To teach good manners, and to curb abuse:
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,
And at the bottom barbarous still and rude;
We are restrain'd indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end;
That now and then a hero must decease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low;
That men engage in it compell'd by force;
And fear, not courage, is its proper source.
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fix'd eternal state
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
Whatever use may urge, or honor plead,
On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly? No—
A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
Will not affront me, and no other can.
Were I empower'd to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well loaded fists;
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue;
Then each might show to his admiring friends,
In honorable bumps his rich amends,
And carry, in contusions of his skull,
A satisfactory receipt in full.

A story, in which native humor reigns,
Is often useful, always entertains:
A graver fact enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied;
But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations dull and dry,
Embellish'd with—He said,—and, So said I.
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame:
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—Droll indeed!
The path of narrative with care pursue,
Still making probability your clue;
On all the vestiges of truth attend,
And let them guide you to a decent end.
Of all ambitions man may entertain,
The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
A great retailer of this curious ware,
Having unloaded and made many stare,

Can this be true?—an arch observer cries;
Yes (rather moved), I saw it with these eyes!
Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
I could not, had I seen it with my own.
A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
The language plain, the incidents well link'd;
Tell not as new what everybody knows,
And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
There, centring in a focus round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet.
What neither yields us profit nor delight
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night;
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.
The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain, [again.
Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause
Such often like the tube they so admire,
Important trifles! have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex whose presence civilizes ours;
Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants
To poison vermin that infest his plants;
But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
As to despise the glory of our kind,
And show the softest minds and fairest forms
As little mercy as the grubs and worms?
They dare not wait the riotous abuse
Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
When wine has given indecent language birth,
And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth;
For seaborn Venus her attachment shows
Still to that element from which she rose,
And, with a quiet which no fumes disturb,
Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.
The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
As if the gnomon on his neighbor's phiz,
Touch'd with the magnet had attracted his.
His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
An extract of his diary—no more,
A tasteless journal of the day before.
He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain.
Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stepp'd home again,
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk.
With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
Adieu, dear sir! lest you should lose it now.
I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss gentleman that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his head into a raree-show?
His odoriferous attempts to please
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
But we that make no honey, though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mix'd resort,
What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort*,
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away.
A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
Quite as absurd, though not so light as he:
A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask,
The solemn fop; significant and budge;
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge.
He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock it never is at home:
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage;
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love.
But when unpack'd your disappointment groans
To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.
Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us, in recitals of disease,
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;
Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped;
Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
Nose, ears and eyes, seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad:
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much:
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,
Your elevated voice goes through the brain;
You fall at once into a lower key,
That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humble bee.
The southern sash admits too strong a light,
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.
He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
Serve him with venison, and he wishes fish;
With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish.
He takes what he at first professed to loathe,
And in due time feeds heartily on both;
Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder if he can—
Alas! his efforts double his distress,
He likes yours little, and his own still less.
Thus always teasing others, always teased,
His only pleasure is to be displeased.
I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
We sometimes think we could a speech produce
Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose;
But, being tried, it dies upon the lip,
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip:
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd;
It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd,
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
To fear each other, fearing none beside.
The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Conceal'd within an unsuspected part
The vainest corner of our own vain heart:
Forever aiming at the world's esteem.
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.

True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear:
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced and nursed.
The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;
Yes, ma'am, and No, ma'am, utter'd softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go;
Each individual, suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colors cannot, paint;
And, if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are, [tarrh.
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and ca-
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Fill'd up at last with interesting news.
Who danc'd with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed:
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstacy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
Recovering what we lost, we know not how,
The faculties that seem'd reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.
The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desperate case.
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox-follower never is reclaim'd.
Some farrier should prescribe a proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse,
Or if, deserving of a better doom,
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
Yet e'en the rogue that serves him, though he stand
To take his honor's orders, cap in hand,
Prefers his fellow grooms with much good sense,
Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
If neither horse nor groom affect the 'squire,
Where can at last his jockeyship retire?
Oh, to the club, the scene of savage joys,
The school of coarse good fellowship and noise;
There, in the sweet society of those
Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
Let him improve his talent if he can,
Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.
Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd,
Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
Given him a soul, and bade him understand;
The reasoning power vouchsafed, of course inferr'd
The power to clothe that reason with his word;
For all is perfect that God works on earth,
And he that gives conception aids the birth.
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,
What uses of his boon the Giver would.
The mind despatch'd upon her busy toil, [soil;
Should range where Providence has bless'd the
Visiting every flower with labor meet,
And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffused may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the listening lover with delight,
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice?
No—nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan;
The melody, that was at first design'd
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years.
Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,
Whom man, for his own hurt, permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape
And would degrade her votary to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.
'Tis an unalterable fix'd decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That heaven and hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,
God and his attributes, (a field of day
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray,)
Fruits of his love, and wonders of his might,
Be never named in ears esteem'd polite;
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.
Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
Is it incredible, or can it seem
A dream to any except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and that fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire?
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies;
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod:
Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,
By fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be express'd.
Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found; [mock,
Touched by that power that you have dared to
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.
It happen'd on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.

The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enrich'd them still the more;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than he appear'd to have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
And ask'd them, with a kind, engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
Inform'd, he gather'd up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That, reaching home, the night, they said, is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here—
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all he deign'd to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?

Now theirs was converse, such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves:
Their views indeed were indistinct and dim,
But yet successful, being aim'd at him.
Christ and his character their only scope,
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
They felt what it became them much to feel,
And, wanting him to loose the sacred seal,
Found him as prompt as their desire was true,
To spread the new-born glories in their view.
Well—what are ages and the lapse of time
Match'd against truths, as lasting as sublime?
Can length of years on God himself exact?
Or make that fiction which was once a fact?
No—marble and recording brass decay,
And, like the graver's memory, pass away;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust:
But truth divine forever stands secure,
Its head is guarded as its base is sure;
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years,
The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that Architect who built the skies.
Hearts may be found, that harbor at this hour
That love of Christ, and all its quickening power;
And lips unstained by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
O days of heaven, and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest!

What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon-wings?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away;
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,
Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
Known by thy bleating. Ignorance thy name.
Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right?
The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light?
Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour,
That come to waft us out of sorrow's power,
Obscure or quench a faculty that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
But gives it usefulness unknown before,
And purifying, makes it shine the more.
A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight;
Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth;
'Tis always active on the side of truth;
Temperance and peace ensure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.
Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eye'd;
A man that would have foil'd at their own play
A dozen would-be's of the modern day;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear:
Yet above all his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme;
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
Suppose themselves monopolists of sense,
And wiser men's ability pretence.
Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold,
Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
Embalm'd forever in its own perfume.
And to say truth, though in its early prime,
And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
That in the valley of decline are lost,
And virtue with peculiar charms appears,
Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years;
Yet age, by long experience well inform'd,
Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
That fire abated which impels rash youth,
Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
And claims a reverence in its shortening day,
That 'tis an honor and a joy to pay.
The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,
Than those a brighter season pours around;
And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigors unimpair'd endure.

What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,
That fire is catching, if you draw too near;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.

To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an almighty power)
Before his presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own,
To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
Though common sense, allow'd a casting voice,
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease, when soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause;
And, while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
Presumes itself chief favorite of the skies.
'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
Shines in the dark, but, usher'd into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.
True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
Of hearts in union mutually disclosed;
And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame.
A dark confederacy against the laws
Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause:
They build each other up with dreadful skill,
As bastions set point-blank against God's will;
Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out;
Call legions up from hell to back the deed;
And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.
But souls, that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And, one in heart, in interest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.
But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when Religion leads the way,
Should flow, like waters after summer showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.
The Christian, in whose soul, though now distress'd,
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possess'd,
When all his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,
Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
Or seem to boast a fire, he does not feel.
The song of Zion is a tasteless thing,
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
And give the strain the compass it demands.
Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat
All but their own experience as deceit!
Will they believe, though credulous enough
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
That there are blest inhabitants on earth,
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
Their very language of a kind that speaks
The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,
Who deal with scripture, its importance felt,
As Tully with Philosophy once dealt,
And, in the silent watches of the night,
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
The social walk, or solitary ride,
Keep still the dear companion at their side?
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
With such a jest as fill'd with hellish glee
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
But veneration or respect finds none,
Save from the subjects of that work alone.
The World grown old her deep discernment
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose, [shows,
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace;
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there;
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeign'd love of him a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,
(And in due time the world shall know it too)
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity! why 'tis his only pride,
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives him all his just demands require.
Without it, his pretensions were as vain
As, having it, he deems the world's disdain;
That great defect would cost him not alone
Man's favorable judgment but his own;
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
Retort the charge, and let the world be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold;
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving and a killing dread:
That while in health the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short;
That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie;
That while she dotes and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
Her utmost reach historical assent,
The doctrines warp'd to what they never meant;
That truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a skull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvas, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel;
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
And, while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design;
At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond the example of our sires digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The world and I fortuitously met;
I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt;
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
And, having struck the balance, now proceed.

Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd
Since she and I conversed together last,
And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occurr'd.
And blest reforms that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found,
Where once intoxication press'd the ground;
The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust;
Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd;
Charity may relax the miser's fist;
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state,)
That fables old, that seem'd forever mute,
Revived, are hastening into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses, discarded long,
Like useless lumber or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again;
That certain feasts are instituted now,
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete;
That having proved the weakness, it should seem,
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,
To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the moral springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done,
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may not produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May such success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic, as in days of old,
Learned at the bar, in the palæstra bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs:
The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught,
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
To build our altar confident and bold,
And say, as stern Elijah said of old,
The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord:
If he be silent, faith is all a whim,
Then Baal is the God, and worship him.

Digression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent,
As when returning to the theme they meant;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make every parish but their own their home.
Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true,
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view;
Yet to consult a little seem'd no crime,
The freakish humor of the present time:
But now to gather up what seems dispersed,
And touch the subject I design'd at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part.
And first, let no man charge me that I mean
To clothe in sable every social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier;
For tell some men that pleasure all their bent,
And laughter all their work, is life misspent,
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades, [shades,
Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening
And while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.
Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that truth and nature teach;
No longer labors merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use:
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
While all the happy man possess'd before,
The gift of nature or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design,
For which Heaven formed the faculty divine.
So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes.
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes;
But let the wise and well-instructed hand,
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd
Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,
Till, tuned at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along.

RETIREMENT.

. . . . . studiis florens ignobilis oti.
VIRG. Georg. lib. iv.

THE ARGUMENT.

The busy universally desirous of retirement—Important purpose for which this desire was given to man—Musing on the works of the creation, a happy employment—The service of God not incompatible, however, with a life of business—Human life; its pursuits—Various motives for seeking retirement—The poet's delight in the study of nature—The lover's fondness for retirement—The hypochondriac—Melancholy, a malady that claims most compassion, receives the least—Sufferings of the melancholy man—The statesman's retirement—His new mode of life and company—Soon weary of retirement, he returns to his former pursuits—Citizens' villas—Fashion of frequenting watering-places—The ocean—The spendthrift in forced retirement—The sportsman ostler—The management of leisure a difficult task—Man will be summoned to account for the employment of life—Books and friends requisite for the man of leisure; and divine communion to fill the remaining void—Religion not adverse to innocent pleasures—The poet concludes with reference to his own pursuit.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at that oar,
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where, all his long anxieties forgot
Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er,
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span.
And, having lived a trifler, die a man. [breast,
Thus conscience pleads her cause within the
Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,
And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own,
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,
From cities humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud.
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
Where works of man are cluster'd close around,
And works of God are hardly to be found,
To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,
Traces of Eden are still seen below,
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.
'Tis well if, look'd for at so late a day,
In the last scene of such a senseless play,
True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
And grace his action ere the curtain fall. [birth,
Souls, that have long despised their heavenly
Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
For threescore years employ'd with ceaseless care
In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
Conversant only with the ways of men,
Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,
Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
And, draining its nutritious powers to feed
Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.
Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world, that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
To serve the sovereign we were born to obey.
Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd
(Infinite skill) in all that he has made!
To trace in nature's most minute design
The signature and stamp of power divine,
Contrivance intricate, express'd with ease,
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
Within the small dimensions of a point,
Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
His mighty work, who speaks and it is done,
The invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,
To whom an atom is an ample field:
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordain'd and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
More hideous foes than fancy can devise;
With helmet-heads and dragon-scales adorn'd,
The mighty myriads now securely scorn'd,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth:
Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers pour'd at his command,
From urns that never fail, through every land;
These like a deluge with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales;
Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails;
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink
The crescent moon, the diadem of night; [light,
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim
These are thy glorious works, thou Source of Good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood!
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair;

Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.
Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
I shrink abashed, and yet aspire to thee;
Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day
Thy words more clearly than thy works display,
That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine
I may resemble thee, and call thee mine.
O blest proficiency! surpassing all
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compared with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show?
Thus studied, used, and consecrated thus,
On earth what is, seems form'd indeed for us;
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires,
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,
But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for him.
Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course:
Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be fear'd amidst the busiest scenes,
Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
But, 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart
To limit thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish fancy points the way;
To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,
Resign our own and seek our Maker's will;
To spread the page of scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no favorite sin,
And search the themes, important above all,
Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of interest or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired
From objects too much dreaded or desired,
Safe from the clamors of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.
Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man;
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years.
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells.
Thus laden dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
A few forsake the throng; with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Seal'd with his signet, whom they serve and love;
Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,
And unregretted are soon snatch'd away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.
Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use;
The love of change that lives in every breast,
Genius, and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize
That courts display before ambitious eyes;
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest, where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare [share.
The world can boast and her chief favorites
With eager step, and carelessly array'd,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight,
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections at whose word they rose,
Next to that power who form'd thee, and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light, though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by;
His hours of leisure and recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.
The lover too shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And every thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair;
Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,

In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace;
So love, that clings around the noblest minds
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds;
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech, and fashions his address;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits;
Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake;
Who will may pant for glory and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell!
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild,
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day-dreams,
Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design,
Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.
Up—God has formed thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue;
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
When he design'd a Paradise below,
The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scatter'd truth that study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart;
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful Heberden, whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove
Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest, or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer-brook are past away.
This is a sight for pity to peruse,
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least:
Job felt it, when he groan'd beneath the rod
And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close-hammer'd steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds that deem derided pain a treat,
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But, with a soul that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing:
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise;
He that has not usurp'd the name of man
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,
To assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes;
Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony disposed aright;
The screws reversed (a task which if he please
God in a moment executes with ease,)
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which art preceptress nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God who makes them heals.
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand.
To thee the day-spring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
Yet seek him, in his favor life is found,
All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound:
Then heaven, eclipsed so long and this dull earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth;
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves, (the statesman at his desk exclaims,
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,)
My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your grey possessor hide,
Receive me, languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise!)
Hour after hour delightfully allot,
To studies then familiar, since forget,

And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardor as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
His undissembling virtue to my breast:
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts that, while they seem to stay
A falling empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued, I come;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice:
We meet at last in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
'Tis done, he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is freedom?—he was always free:
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize:
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office, and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile express'd,
In freedom lost so long, now repossess'd; [mands,
The tongue whose strains were cogent as com-
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that, whether dress'd or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that
Its cooling vapor o'er the dewy meads, [spreads
Downs, that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,
Seem all created since he travell'd last.
Master of all the enjoyments he design'd,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land.
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,
Then, swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;
Nor can he much affect the neighboring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend.
A man, whom marks of condescending grace,
Teach, while they flatter him his proper place;
Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause:
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence,
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence;
On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But nowhere with a current so serene,
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss;
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here;
No happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm thee more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or, if the thought occurr'd, not duly weigh'd,
He sighs—for after all by slow degrees
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;
To cross his ambling pony day by day
Seems at the best but dreaming life away;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there;
With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.
Suburban villas, highway-side retreats, [streets,
That dread the encroachment of our growing
Tight boxes, neatly sash'd, and in a blaze
With all a July sun's collected rays,
Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought
That could afford retirement, or could not?
'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
The second milestone fronts the garden gate;
A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,
You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
There, prison'd in a parlor snug and small,
Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
The man of business, and his friends compress'd
Forget their labors, and yet find no rest;
But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
From every window, and the fields are green;
Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
And what could a remoter scene show more?
A sense of elegance we rarely find
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
And ignorance of better things makes man,
Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can;
And he, that deems his leisure well bestow'd
In contemplation of a turnpike-road,
Is occupied as well, employs his hours
As wisely, and as much improves his powers,
As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
Yet hence, alas! insolvencies; and hence
The unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,
From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.
Your prudent grandmammas, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
When health required it, would consent to roam,
Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home;

But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.
Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the power and majesty of God.
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep;
Vast as it is, it answers as it flows
The breathings of the lightest air that blows;
Curling and whitening over all the waste,
The rising waves obey the increasing blast,
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
Till he that rides the whirlwind checks the rein,
Then all the world of waters sleeps again.
Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
Votaries of pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
O grant a poet leave to recommend
(A poet fond of nature, and your friend)
Her slighted works to your admiring view;
Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.
Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
To waste unheard, the music of his strains,
And, deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,
That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,
The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,
Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd
In gathering plenty yet to be enjoy'd,
Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
Of God, beneficent in all his ways; [shine!
Graced with such wisdom how would beauty
Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.
Anticipated rents and bills unpaid,
Force many a shining youth into the shade,
Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed
From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme;
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime:
The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
He likes the country, but in truth must own,
Most likes it when he studies it in town.
Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame,
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
And always, ere he mounted, kiss'd his horse.
The estate, his sires had own'd in ancient years,
Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's.
Jack vanish'd, was regretted, and forgot;
'Tis wild good-nature's never failing lot.
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
My lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
Curried his nag and look'd another way;
Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
He press'd him much to quit his base employ;
His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
Influence and power, were all at his command:
Peers are not always generous as well bred,
But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
Jack bow'd, and was obliged—confess'd 'twas strange,
That so retired he should not wish a change,
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
And his old stint—three thousand pounds a-year.
Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe;
Some seeking happiness not found below;
Some to comply with humor, and a mind
To social scenes by nature disinclined;
Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust;
Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must;
But few, that court Retirement, are aware
Of half the toils they must encounter there.
Lucrative offices are seldom lost
For want of powers proportion'd to the post:
Give e'en a dunce the employment he desires,
And he soon finds the talents it requires;
A business with an income at its heels
Furnishes alwnys oil for its own wheels.
But in his arduous enterprise to close
His active years with indolent repose,
He finds the labors of that state exceed
His utmost faculties, severe indeed.
'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
But not to manage leisure with a grace;
Absence of occupation is not rest,
A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
The veteran steed, excused his task at length,
In kind compassion of his failing strength,
And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,
Exempt from future service all his days,
There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind:
But when his lord would quit the busy road,
To taste a joy like that he has bestow'd,
He proves, less happy than his favor'd brute,
A life of ease a difficult pursuit. [seem
Thought, to the man that never thinks, may
As natural as when asleep to dream;
But reveries (for human minds will act)
Specious in show, impossible in fact,
Those flimsy webs, that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought:
Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign;
Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds. [dain'd?
Whence, and what are we? to what end or-
What means the drama by the world sustain'd?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ?
Life an entrusted talent, or a toy?
Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,
Man shall be summon'd and the dead attend?
The trumpet—will it sound? the curtain rise?
And show the august tribunal of the skies,
Where no prevarication shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,

The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And conscience and our conduct judge us all?
Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honorable names,
Your useful labors and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enrich'd with the discoveries ye have made;
Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And, after poising her adventurous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,
Far more intelligent, and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye, when happiest, and enlighten'd most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch that wants both hands;
As useless if it goes as when it stands
Books, therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves;
Nor those, in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show;
Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laugh'd his words to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side-thrust;
Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;
But such as learning, without false pretence,
The friend of truth, the associate of sound sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment laboring in the scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use:
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking hands,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars invention, and makes fancy lame;
Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune;
And novels (witness every month's review)
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.
Friends (for I cannot stint, as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one;
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast
Will stand advanced a step above the rest;
Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well born, well disciplined, who, placed apart
From vulgar minds, have honor much at heart,
And, though the world may think the ingredients odd,
The love of virtue, and the fear of God!
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean,
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene;
For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
A sepulchre, in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman,* his remark was shrewd,
How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—Solitude is sweet.
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dulness of still life away;
Divine communion, carefully enjoy'd,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
Oh sacred art! to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,
Scorn'd in a world, indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
Not knowing thee, we reap, with bleeding hands,
Flowers of rank odor upon thorny lands,
And, while experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief,
Murmuring and ungrateful discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant,
Those humors, tart as wines upon the fret,
Which idleness and weariness beget;
These, and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast,
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice;
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not a moment, in his royal heart;
'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake.
His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
And wilds, familiar with the lion's roar,
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before:
'Tis love like his that can alone defeat
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued;
To study culture, and with artful toil
To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil;
To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands;
To cherish virtue in an humble state,
And share the joys your bounty may create;
To mark the matchless workings of the power
That shuts within its seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In color these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes;
To teach the canvas innocent deceit
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of time.

* Bruyère.

Me poetry (or, rather, notes that aim
Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse;
Content if, thus sequester'd, I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise,
And, while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

THE TASK.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the Sofa for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel therefore is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

BOOK I.

THE SOFA.

THE ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the sofa—A schoolboy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected—Colonnades commended—Alcove, and the view from it—The wilderness—The Grove—The Thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art—The weariesomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced—Gipsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favorable to virtue—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

I SING the Sofa. I who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity,* and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion—for the fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile:
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock,
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of Invention; weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms:
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen; but perforated sore,
And drill'd in holes, the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan; made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seats with plenteous wadding stuff'd,
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needlework sublime.
There might ye see the piony spread wide,
The full blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish, sever'd into stripes
That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair; the back erect
Distress'd the weary loins that felt no ease;
The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part
That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor. [placed
These for the rich; the rest, whom Fate had
In modest mediocrity, content
With base materials, sat on well tann'd hides,
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fix'd,
If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
Ponderous and fix'd by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,

* See Poems.

An alderman of Cripplegate contrived;
And some inscribe the invention to a priest,
Burly and big, and studious of his ease.
But, rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
And bruised the side, and, elevated high,
Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased
Than when employed to accommodate the fair,
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
And in the midst an elbow it received,
United yet divided, twain at once,
So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
And so two citizens, who take the air,
Close pack'd and smiling, in a chaise and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame,
By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow
The growth of what is excellent; so hard
To attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus first necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
And Luxury the accomplish'd Sofa last. [sick,
The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour,
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,
The tedious rector drawling o'er his head;
And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep
Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour,
To slumber in the carriage more secure,
Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk,
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet
Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.
Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe
Of libertine Excess! The Sofa suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a Sofa, may I never feel;
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering, pennyless, and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not; nor the palate, undepraved
By culinary arts, unsavory deems.
No Sofa then awaited my return;
No Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep;
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and color from the locks they spare;
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot,
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that soothed
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth,
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The rustling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His laboring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlook'd, our favorite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which, daily view'd,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge, and the scrutiny of years—
Praise justly due to those that I describe.
Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighboring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice-fingered Art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still-repeated circles, screaming loud,

The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace forever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.
Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!
More delicate his timorous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season, and with such a charge,
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair;
'Tis perched upon the green hill top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms,
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
And, hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous whether pleased or pain'd,
Oft have I wished the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, heavy laden, brings his beverage home,
Far fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.
So farewell envy to the peasant's nest!
If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view;
My visit still, but never mine abode.
Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns; and, in their shaded walks
And long protracted bowers, enjoyed at noon
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus,* he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines;
And, though himself so polished, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade.
Descending now,—but cautious, lest too fast,—
A sudden steep upon a rustic bridge,
We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flowery thyme,
We mount again, and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood.

He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth: and plotting in the dark,
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.
The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The panels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few,
Few transient years, won from the abyss ab-
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize, [horr'd
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;
And, posted on this speculative height,
Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but, scatter'd by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There from the sun-burnt hay-field homeward creeps
The loaded wain; while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by;
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the grey smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wannish grey; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odors: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honors bright.
O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between,)
The Ouse, dividing the well water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.
Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
A little naiad her impoverish'd urn
All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now,
But that the lord* of this enclosed demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share: the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,

* Ibid.

Yet awful as the consecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
The checquer'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they
dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.
And now, with nerves new braced and spirits
cheer'd,
We tread the wilderness whose well roll'd walks,
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff;
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days and nights without a groan.
By censeless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That Nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads [moves.
An instant's pause, and lives but while she
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limped element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers lakes, and streams
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation: e'en the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns—
More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves.
Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its associate in the most,
Good temper: spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The powers of fancy and strong thought are
E'en age itself seems privileged in them [theirs;
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The veteran shows, and, gracing a grey beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.
Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oftenest sacrifice are favor'd least.
The love of Nature and the scenes she draws
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be
found,
Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odors of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom:
Who, satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls.
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet Nature every sense.
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renew'd;
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapors, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light;
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue;
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires;
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
To gaze at Nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire:
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more
The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair [own.
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her
It is the constant revolution, stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest; and wonders why.
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread
The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences; and sits,
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room,
Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these

Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the
The slavish dread of solitude that breeds [dread,
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their inveterate habits, all forbid. [long
Whom call we gay? That honor has been
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
Beneath the rosy clouds, while yet the beams
Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gayety of those
Whose head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed;
And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gayety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
Then snug inclosures in the shelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us; happy to renounce awhile,
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absence may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man. His hoary head,
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner,
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores; and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never smiled again! and now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed!
I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or at best of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature; and, though capable of arts,
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honorable toil!
Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft,
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers; and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gayety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world [much,
And, breathing wholesome air, and wandering
Need other physic none to heal the effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants indeed are many; but supply
Is obvious, placed within the easy reach
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tam'd, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole,
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot:
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the antarctic. E'en the favor'd isles,
So lately found, although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and, inert
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain

In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again:
But, far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
Thee, gentle savage![*] whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity, perhaps,
Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past; and thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found [state,
Their former charms? And, having seen our
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
Rude as thou art, (for we returned thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show),
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart,
And spiritless as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot,
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country: thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
She tells me, too, that duly every morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste
For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.
But though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft: in proud, and gay,
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pamper'd cities, sloth, and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world:
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touch'd by Reynolds a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there,
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone
The power of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London: where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied,
As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.
She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this queen of cities that so fair
May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
To avenge than to prevent the breach of law:
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oftimes honor too.
To peculators of the public gold: [puts
That thieves at home must hang; but he, that
Into his over-gorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God;
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
And centring all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.
God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?
Possess ye, therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only can ye shine;
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare

[*] Omai.

The splendor of your lamps; they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes; the thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

THE ARGUMENT.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book—Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow—Prodigies enumerated—Sicilian earthquake—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin—God the agent in them—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved—Our own late miscarriages accounted for—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation—The reverend advertiser of engraved sermons—Petit-maitre parson—The good preacher—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved—Apostrophe to popular applause—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with—Sum of the whole matter—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity—Their folly and extravagance—The mischiefs of profusion—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed; as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more! My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick, with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not color'd like his own; and, having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplored,
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home:—then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.
Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations in a world that seems
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
And by the voice of all its elements [winds
To preach the general doom.* When were the
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors† from above,
Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature‡ with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all? But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve
And stand exposed by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.
Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause;
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works the dreadful part alone.
How does the earth receive him?—with what
Of gratulation and delight her King? [signs
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For he has touch'd them. From the extremest
Of elevation down into the abyss [point
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise,
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid; and the fix'd and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with a vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs

* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.
† August 18, 1783.
‡ Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted; and with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that Voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigors of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free. [fast,
Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee
Freedom! whom they that lose thee so regret,
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake.
Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And, in the furious inquest that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
A plague into his blood; and cannot use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And, needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then!—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle
Moved not, while theirs was rock'd like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!
Happy the man who sees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill that chequer life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns (since from the least
The greatest oft originate;) could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan;
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And having found his instrument, forgets,
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men,
That live an atheist life: involves the heaven
In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrify the breath of blooming Health.
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and re-action. He has found
The source of the disease that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the
And did he not of old employ his means [world?
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve; ask of him,
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.
England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found, [clime
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too, and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonor on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as
And tender as a girl, all essence'd o'er, [smooth
With odors, and as profligate as sweet;
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath, [these
And love when they should fight; when such as
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honors, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen
Each in the field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame;
They made us many soldiers. Chatham still

Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savor maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility! Breathe soft,
Ye clarionets; and softer still, ye flutes;
That winds and waters, lull'd by magic sounds,
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore!
True, we have lost an empire, let it pass.
True; we may thank the perfidy of France,
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state!
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
And, shamed as we have been, to the very beard
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved
Too weak for those decisive blows that once
Ensured our mastery there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honors of the turf as all our own!
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame ye might conceal at home
In foreign eyes!—be grooms and win the plate,
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
'Tis generous to communicate your skill
To those that need it! Folly is soon learn'd:
And under such preceptors who can fail!

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform,
To which the mind resorts in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
To arrest the fleeting images that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast
And force them sit till he has pencil'd off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views:
Then to dispose his copies with such art,
That each may find its most propitious light,
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labor and the skill it cost;
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
He feels the anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in the task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
Their least amusement where he found the most.
But is amusement all? Studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain.
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
But where are its sublimer trophies found?
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed
By rigor? or whom laugh'd into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed:
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and, stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit therefore (and I name it fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vaporing in an empty school,
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers) [stand,
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect! [were!
Are all such teachers?—would to heaven all
But hark—the doctor's voice!—fast wedged between
Two empirics he stands, and with swoll'n cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs!
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
The adagio and andante it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware?
Oh, name it not in Gath!—it cannot be, [aid.
That grave and learned clerks should need such
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and drynurse of the church!

I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves,
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;
Frequent in park with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyships—a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,

And well prepared, by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of world,
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride:
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.
Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own—
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture! Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!
In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What! will a man play tricks? will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form,
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practised at the glass!
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all besides,
Though learn'd with labor, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgments ill inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the press'd nostril, spectacle bestrid.
Some, decent in demeanor while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves;
And, having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not!
Forth comes the pocket-mirror.—First we stroke
An eyebrow; next compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air most gracefully perform'd
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low:
The better hand more busy gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye,
With opera glass to watch the moving scene
And recognize the slow-retiring fair.—
Now this is fulsome; and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.
He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms [stoop
That he had taken in charge. He would not
To conquer those by jocular exploits
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.
O popular applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But, swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!
With all his canvas set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise, from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald
Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
And craving Poverty, and in the bow
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more,
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as adoration breathes?
Ah, spare your idol! think him human still.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.
All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome
Drew from the stream below. More favor'd, we
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain to filter off a crystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth [man?
And spring-time of the world; ask'd, Whence is
Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life

That fools discover it, and stray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
Of Academus—is this false or true?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
If Christ, then why resort at every turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store?
How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preach'd!
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candor too!
And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendor, and to exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn;
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;
Perverting often, by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct;
Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
For ghostly counsel—if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonor'd in the exterior form
And mode of its conveyance by such tricks,
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage—
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapp'd,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinced.
As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, so we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)
Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things,
Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like ours,
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There closely braced
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sovereign and most effectual to secure
A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else our lot.
But, thus admonish'd, we can walk erect—
One proof at least of manhood! while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant
Who waits to dress us arbitrates their date;
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived;
And, making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor. We have run
Through every change that Fancy, at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
And, studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little used,
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires;
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man of the town dines late, but soon enough,
With reasonable forecast and despatch,
To ensure a side-box station at half price.
You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!
The rout is Folly's circle, which she draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early grey, but never wise;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure, hopeless of success;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports which only childhood could excuse.
There they are happiest who dissemble best
Their weariness; and they the most polite
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)
Make just reprisals; and, with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
To her, who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlackey'd; who, in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, a tthe watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left. [wives,
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven.—
So fare we in this prison-house, the world;
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them fast
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
Then shake them in despair, and dance again!
Now basket up the family of plagues
That waste our vitals; peculation, sale
Of honor, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen

As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
Profusion unrestrained with all that's base
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred, within the memory of no few,
A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use;
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey; unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band,
That holds mankind together, to a scourge
Profusion, deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps the consciences of public men,
Till they can laugh at Virtue; mock the fools
That trust them; and in the end disclose a face
That would have shock'd Credulity herself,
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?
This does Profusion, and the accursed cause
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth
Were precious and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenuous worth,
That blush'd at its own praise; and press the youth
Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care a thriving vigorous plant;
The mind was well-inform'd, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleap'd
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke:
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not till penitence had won
Lost favor back again, and closed the breach.
But discipline, a faithful servant long,
Declined at length into the vale of years:
A palsy struck his arm; his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age; his voice, unstrung,
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more
Than reverence in perverse rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend; and Discipline at length,
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd fell sick and died.
Then Study languish'd, Emulation slept,
And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,
His cap well lined with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue performed the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then Compromise had place, and Scrutiny
Became stone blind; Precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued;
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth
Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse; and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
The tassell'd cap and the spruce band a jest,
A mockery of the world! What need of these
For gamsters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
With belted waist and pointers at their heels
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learned in childhood, is forgot;
And such expense as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name
That sits a stigma on his father's house,
And cleaves through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition, thus acquired,
Where science and where virtue are profess'd?
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly, but to spoil him is a task
That bids defiance to the united powers
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
Now blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?
The children, crook'd and twisted, and deform'd,
Through want of care; or her, whose winking
And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood? [eye
The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
She needs herself correction; needs to learn
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.
He graced a college,* in which order yet
Was sacred; and was honor'd, loved, and wept
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd
With such ingredients of good sense and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
Nor can example hurt them: what they see
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those, whose negligence or sloth
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows! Rusting there
In wild disorder, and unfit for use.
What wonder, if, discharged into the world,
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine!
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war,

* Bene't College, Cambridge.

With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.
Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birthplace and his dam? The country mourns,
Mourns because every plague that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice that Policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn.
Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the robed pedagogue! Else let the arraign'd
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains
Were cover'd with the pest; the streets were fill'd;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook,
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scaped;
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

THE ARGUMENT.

Self-recollection and reproof—Address to domestic happiness—Some account of myself—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise—Justification of my censures—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions—Domestic happiness addressed again—Few lovers of the country—My tame hare—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden—Pruning—Framing—Greenhouse—Sowing of flower seeds—The country preferable to the town even in the winter—Reasons why it is deserted at that season—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

As one who, long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd,
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape;
If chance at length he finds a greensward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He chirrups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;
So I, designing other themes, and call'd
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat
Of academic fame (howe'er deserved,)
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.
But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
If toil awaits me, or if dangers new.
Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose,
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains;
Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
There, undisturb'd by Folly, and apprised
How great the danger of disturbing her,
To muse in silence, or at least confine
Remarks that gall so many to the few,
My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
If oftimes proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.
Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting long enjoy thee! too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup:
Thou art the nurse of Virtue, in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honor, dignity, and fair renown!
Till prostitution elbows us aside,
In all our crowded streets; and senates seem
Convened for purposes of empire less
Than to release the adultress from her bond.
The adultress! what a theme for angry verse!
What provocation to the indignant heart,
That feels for injur'd love! but I disdain
The nauseous task, to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame!
No:—let her pass, and, charioted along
In guilty splendor, shake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has washed them white;
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now, of character unsmirch'd,
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,
Not to be pass'd: and she, that had renounced
Her sex's honor, was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not received;
But was a wholesome rigor in the main,
And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men too were nice in honor in those days,
And judged offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required
His every nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid, with the blood that he had basely spared,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now
We are become so candid and so fair,
So liberal in construction, and so rich
In Christian charity, (good-natured age!)
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,

Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,
Well equipnged, is ticket good enough
To pass us readily through every door.
Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,)
May claim this merit still—that she ndmits
The worth of what she mimics with such care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,
Where Vice has such nllowanee, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.
I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since: with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew,
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts, [live.
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, nnd not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed;
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly, [noon,
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known; and call the rant
A history: describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note;
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That he who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation: travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fix'd,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity, now, that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
That, having wielded the elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a Power who swears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,—
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases: what's the world to you?
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
And catechise it well: apply thy glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath:
I cannot analyze the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point,
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss:
Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage,
Or heedless folly by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.
God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom. In his works,
Though wondrous, he commands us in his word,
To seek him rather where his mercy shines.
The mind indeed enlighten'd from above,
Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
But never yet did philosophic tube,
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of Observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, his family of worlds,
Discover him that rules them; such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often too
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her Author more;

From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde and mad mistake.
But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and, viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives him his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches: piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And his word sagacious. Such, too, thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna! And such thine, in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,
And sound integrity, not more than famed
For sanctity of manners undefiled.
All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flower dishevell'd in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream.
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it, though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up;
But which the poor, and the despised of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.
O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural pleasure pass'd!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets;
Though many boast thy favors, and affect
To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in Paradise (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left.)
Substantial happiness for transient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale,
Fearless and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
Be quell'd in all our summer months' retreat;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sake its silence and its shade.
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultured and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack,
And clamors of the field?—Detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain;
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence, that agonies inspire
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs?
Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!
Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at last familiar; she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou mayest eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou mayest frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure
To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd;
For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged
All that is human in me to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave;
And, when I place thee in it, sighing say,
"I knew at least one hare that had a friend."
How various his employments whom the world
Calls idle; and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
And Nature, in her cultivated trim
Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—
Can he want occupation who has these?
Will he be idle who has much to enjoy?
Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,
Not waste it, and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account,
From whom are all our blessings, business finds
E'en here: while sedulous I seek to improve,
At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,
The mind He gave me; driving it, though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work,
By causes not to be divulged in vain,
To its just point—the service of mankind.
He, that attends to his interior self,
That has a heart, and keeps it: has a mind
That hungers, and supplies it; and who seeks
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
No unimportant, though a silent, task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem

To him that leads it wise, and to be praised;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.
The morning finds the self-sequestered man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
In selfish silence, but imparted oft,
As aught occurs, that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment, digested well.
Or if the garden, with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard Labor needs his watchful eye,
Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself. No works, indeed,
That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ; but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees,
That meet, no barren interval between,
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits afford;
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.
These therefore are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at the expense of neighboring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,
And hence e'en Winter fills his wither'd hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.*
Fair recompense of labor well bestow'd,
And wise precaution; which a clime so rude
Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child
Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
Discovering much the temper of her sire.
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
Maternal nature had reversed its course,
She brings her infants forth with many smiles;
But, once delivered, kills them with a frown.
He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the sun peeps, and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn he gives them every beam,
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.
To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—
Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
That toiling ages have but just matured,
And at this moment unassay'd in song. [since,
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard;
And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye,
The solitary shilling. Pardon then,
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,
The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
Of critic appetite no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.
The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast:
For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily therefore, and with prudent heed,
He seeks a favor'd spot; that where he builds
The agglomerated pile his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
The ascending damps; then leisurely impose,
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest forms secure
The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves;
The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls.
He shuts it close, and the first labor ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffused, attain the surface: when, behold!
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,
And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress; which obtain'd, the overcharged
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapor dank;
And, purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
The impatient fervor, which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well fill'd with well prepared
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,
And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds.
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time subdues

* Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.—*Virg.*

The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,
And spreading wide their spongy lobes; at first
Pale, wan, and livid; but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish;
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
These have their sexes; and when summer
The bee transports the fertilizing meal [shines,
From flower to flower, and e'en the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant Art
Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.
Grudge not, ye rich, (since Luxury must have
His dainties, and the World's more numerous
Lives by contriving delicates for you,) [half
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labor, and the skill,
That day and night are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat, and cold, and wind, and steam, [ing flies,
Moisture, and drought, mice, worms, and swarm-
Minute as dust, and numberless. oft work
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust;
And oft at last in vain. The learn'd and wise
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit
Of too much labor, worthless when produced.
Who loves a garden loves a greenhouse too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle, and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
The amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honors; and the spangled bean,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of every leaf that can endure [bite,
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd
Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; the Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria: foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen
In every flash of his far beaming eye.
Nor taste alone and well contrived display
Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious; cares on which depends
Their vigor, injured soon, not soon restored.
The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
Close interwoven, where they meet the vase,
Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.
Discharge but these kind offices (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,
The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,
Each opening blossom freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.
So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round; still ending and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
That softly swell'd and gaily dress'd appears
A flowery island, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deem'd a labor due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well match'd
And sorted hues, (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more,)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home;
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
Without it all is gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath; where Industry misspent,
But proud of his uncouth, ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moons [cumber'd soil,
Of close ramm'd stones has charged the en-
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He therefore, who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind

Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
Of the smooth shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen;
Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbor shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well [lend.
The strength they borrow with the grace they
All hate the rank society of weeds,
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
The impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
O blest seclusion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil; proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
By vicious Custom, raging uncontroll'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce temptation, seconded within
By traitor Appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in Hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe.
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace,
No loose or wanton, though a wandering, muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless indeed, that dissipated minds,
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
Allured by my report: but sure no less
That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and, when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that, its worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them and promote them most,
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol.
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and finds raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men—universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers, and be destined to divide
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds!
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves, and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected nature pines,
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamor, and whose very silence charms;
To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse
That metropolitan volcanoes make, [long;
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day
And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud with his ten thousand wheels?
They would be, were not madness in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
Who had survived the father, serv'd the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived,
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes gazed upon awhile,
Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight,
Grow on the gamester's elbows; and the alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!
The omnipotent magician, Brown appears!
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
Of our forefathers—a grave whisker'd race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where more exposed
It may enjoy the advantage of the north,
And agnish east, till time shall have transform'd
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise;
And streams as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—
E'en as he bids! The enraptured owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd, and yet finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan,
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
Labor'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy! [heaven
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come
When, having no stake left, no pledge to endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal,
To serve his country. Ministerial grace
Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse

Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
To be refunded duly, when his vote
Well managed shall have earn'd its worthy price.
O innocent, compared with arts like these,
Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content,
So he may wrap himself in honest rags
At his last gasp; but could not for a world
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and sickening at his own success.
Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, despatch,
As duly as the swallows disappear, [town.
The world of wandering knights and squires to
London engulfs them all! The shark is there,
And the shark's prey; the spendthrift, and the leech
That sucks him; there the sycophant, and he
Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
Were character'd on every statesman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."
These are the charms that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean hard-handed Poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
That at the sound of winter's hoary wing
Unpeople all our counties of such herds
Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose,
And wanton vagrants as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.
O thou, resort and mart of all the earth,
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh,
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

THE ARGUMENT.

The post comes in—The newspaper read—The world contemplated at a distance—Address to winter—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The wagoner—A poor family piece—The rural thief—Public houses—The multitude of them censured—The farmer's daughter: what she was; what she is—The simplicity of country manners almost lost—Causes of the change—Desertion of the country by the rich—Neglect of magistrates—The militia principally in fault—The new recruit and his transformation—Reflection on bodies corporate—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world, [locks;
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet, careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And, having dropp'd the expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writers' cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But O the important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed
And bored with elbow points through both his sides,
Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage:
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not e'en critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts Ambition. On the summit see
The seals of office glitter in his eyes; [heels,
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At his
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft
Meanders, lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
To engross a moment's notice; and yet begs,

Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise;
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their
Nectareous essences. Olympian dews, [sweets,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favorite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katerfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations: I behold
The tumult and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return—a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit and is still at home.
O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other
snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg'd by storms along its slippery way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the
sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath, that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes
out;
And the clear voice, symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd, spare feast! a radish and an egg!
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlook'd for, life preserved and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
O evenings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavory throng,
To thaw him into feeling; or the smart
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
The slope of faces from the floor to the roof
(As if one master spring controll'd them all,)
Relax'd into a universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks of joy
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contrived

To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dullness, and give time a shove.
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoil'd and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the World's Time is Time in masquerade!
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motly plumes; and, where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom Fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most;
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, fit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted Time, and, night by night
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far oft turns aside,
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
Which seen delights him not; then, coming home,
Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
With colors mix'd for a far different use,
Paint cards, and dolls, and every idle thing
That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.
Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the Night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand em-
In letting fall the curtain of repose [ploy'd
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:
Not sumptuously adorn'd, not needing aid,
Like homely featured Night, of clustering gems;
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born to please;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me prhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlor twilight: such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all. [powers,
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial
That never felt a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has Fancy ludicrous and wild
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused, have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars,
Pendulous and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still, [proach.
Though still deceived, some stranger's near ap-
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers; and, snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved,
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favorite herb; while all the leafless groves,
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and with never ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted; or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side;
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves; that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads, adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its sluggish pace
Noisless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,

While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
O happy; and, in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy wagon is thy wife, and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet show that thou hast mercy! which the great,
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labor all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad, and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well;
And while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd,
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined; and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf half eaten without sauce
Of savory cheese, or butter, costlier still;
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas,
Where penury is felt the thought is chained
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few:
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care,
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But oftimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused
Because deserving, silently retire!
But be ye of good courage! Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase;
And all your numerous progeny, well train'd,
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labor too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
But poverty with most, who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plash'd neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,
An ass's burden, and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away,
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door, however well secured,
Where Chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change,
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home; themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action, and imbrutes the man.
O for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love!
Pass where we may, through city or through
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land, [town,
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom: the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk! the fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard: [she,
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,

The cheek distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame!
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts,
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill!—'tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little: vain the attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
The excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot: and ten thousand casks,
Forever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriously drunk, obey the important call!
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;—
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Would I had fall'n upon those happier days,
That poets celebrate; those golden times,
And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose. [hearts
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had
That felt their virtues: Innocence, it seems,
From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the
The footsteps of Simplicity, impress'd [groves;
Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing)
Then were not all effaced: then speech profane
And manners profligate were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture: and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it:—I still must envy them an age
That favor'd such a dream; in days like these
Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides,
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No: we are polish'd now! The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost!
Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propp'd upon French heels; she might be deem'd
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care!
The town has tinged the country: and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural; but, alas!
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
The ungarded door was safe; men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
And slumbers unalarm'd. Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polish'd arms be prim'd with care,
And drop the night-bolt;—ruffians are abroad;
And the first 'larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
E'en daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess:
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague,
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His silk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—
Base here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touch'd
Corruption! whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wildfowl or venison, and his errand speeds.
But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark
Of public virtue, ever wish'd removed,
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures; now and then
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair;
Is balloted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears

A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please.
To do he knows not what. The task perform'd,
That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes.
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home,
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends;
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;
To be a pest where he was useful once;
Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.
Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.
But man, associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond
For interest sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,
Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature; and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial Justice red.
Hence too the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzles by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.
But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural too
The firstborn of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favorite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.
I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder; and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.
There too, enamour'd of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last,
With transports, such as favor'd lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known
Ingenious Cowley! and though now reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.
I still revere thee, courtly though retired;
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
Not unemploy'd; and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And, though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of his hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works, [form'd
And all can taste them: minds that have been
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
E'en in the stifling bosom of the town
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled,
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the wall
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed, [proofs
The Frenchman's darling?* are they not all
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss

* Mignonette.

By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds,
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct: over head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands,
A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardor he contrives
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.
Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,
And harmlesss pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown! hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honors, or emolument, or fame;
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

BOOK V.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

THE ARGUMENT.

A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall—The empress of Russia's palace of ice—Amusements of monarchs—War, one of them—Wars, whence—And whence monarchy—The evils of it—English and French loyalty contrasted—The Bastile, and a prisoner there—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country—Modern patriotism questionable, and why—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable—The slavish state of man by nature—Deliver him, Deist, if you can—Grace must do it—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated—Their different treatment—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free—His relish of the works of God—Address to the Creator.

'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze, [ray
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair
As they design'd to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and, as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,
Deep plunging, and again deep plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the driften snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighboring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first fair gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side, [call
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,
To seize the fair occasion: well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut; and, wading at their head
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought: the imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close; and berry-bearing thorns,

That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose,)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigor of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts; self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repays their labor more; and, perch'd aloft
By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.
Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps
The mildam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below;
No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks
With forms so various that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam; there, embossed and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the North. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores,
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:
In such a palace Poetry might place
The armory of Winter; where his troops
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined; nor other cement ask'd
Than water interfus'd to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side; a watery light
Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy, though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,
Blush'd on the panels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat (there;
(What seem'd at least commodious seat) were
Sofa and couch, and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was warm to the warm touch; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.
Alas 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesign'd severity, that glanced
(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless, as it seem'd
Intrinsically precious; to the foot
Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have play'd
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain high.
Some have amused the dull sad years of life
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves to immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy, the world.
When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they plough'd, and sow'd,
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife,
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquench'd
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon by a righteous judgment in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unblooded steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim;
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call

These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some,
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth; these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest for strength,
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds,
Reverenced no less. Who could with him com-
Or who so worthy to control themselves? [pare?
As he, whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That, being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink, and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet; and, ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born
To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,
And sweating in his service, his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning; and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp; [died.
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and
Strange, that such folly, as lifts bloated man
To eminence, fit only for a god,
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
E'en in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that, when at length mankind
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made.
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some, whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because delivered down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing!
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet,
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given, or wrong sustain'd,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humor dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and, reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely, and with delight, who leaves us free:
But, recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still;
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.
We love the man, the paltry pageant you:
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
You the regardless author of its woes:
We for the sake of liberty a king,
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.

The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
Not often unsuccessful: power usurp'd
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts;
The surest presage of the good they seek.*

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastile.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts;
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music, such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
That e'en our enemies, so oft employ'd
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he who values Liberty confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape!
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are
gone,
To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that, though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music: that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball:
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labor; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting, and without her tools—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door;
Then downward and then upward, then aslant,
And then alternate; with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish; till the sum, exactly found
In all directions, he begins again.—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers would not
kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation, makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean god,
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of Discovery; and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence, till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free.

My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapors, and disposes more
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine:
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives,
From nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.
Yet being free I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains nowhere patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigor of thy fickle clime;
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere;
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events, [may!
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I
But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Design'd by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole

* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause
Who slights the charities for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale [hearts
And sickly, while her champions wear their
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd control, [sons
And hew'd them link from link; then Albion's
Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;
And, shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view.
'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And, seeing the old castle of the state,
That promised once more firmness, so assail'd
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was register'd in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock:
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.
But there is yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away:
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind:
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
And are august; but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word
That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has fill'd the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the Artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And, still designing a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise.
These, therefore, are occasional, and pass;
Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labors of his love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty: a flight into his arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.
Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But, ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul,
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not, from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience! He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble him, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse, [sins
Far worse than all the plagues, with which his
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave;
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere;
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke, [ensues,
And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace
But spurious and short-lived; the puny child
Of self-congratulating pride, begot
On fancied innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonor by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause
Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
And stored the earth so plenteously with means
To gratify the hunger of his wish;
And doth he reprobate, and will he damn
The use of his own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
Dishonors God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? have they faith

In what, with such solemnity of tone
And gesture, they propound to our belief?
Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
Is but an instrument, on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal, authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs be-
To excuses in which reason has no part) [long
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
(As often as libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair, [moves
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to the first and only fair.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise:
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high-sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide wandering soul.
The STILL SMALL VOICE is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect;
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them and to immortalize her trust:
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure to his loved land,
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
Till Persecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—"My Father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his who, unimpeach'd
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you.
He is indeed a freeman, free by birth
Of no mean city; plann'd or e'er the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound; but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.
Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst
His works. Admitted once to his embrace, [taste
Thou shalt perceive that thou was blind before;
Thine eyes shall be instructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight
'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone,
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb

* See Hume.

It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it, and admires; but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And, such well pleased to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touch'd from Heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read his wonders in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for his
Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise;
Praise that, from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledged sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees him or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she own'd before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;
The unambiguous footsteps of the God,
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man,
That nightly fill the skies with silent pomp, [they
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were
With which heaven rang, when every star, in
To gratulate the new-created earth, [haste
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts,
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race
Favor'd as ours; transgressors from the womb,
And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who long detained on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar [rocks,
His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost,
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employ'd,
Worlds that had never been hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee,
Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet, deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd, and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as
The glory of thy work; which yet appears [blind,
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st;
Thy providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves [sleep,
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity; till pure as thou art pure;
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause,
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not, [song,
Till thou hast touch'd them; 'tis the voice of
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random without honor, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavor, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But, O thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

THE ARGUMENT.

Bells at a distance—Their effect—A fine noon in winter—A sheltered walk—Meditation better than books—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected—God maintains it by an unremitted act—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved—Animals happy, a delightful sight—Origin of cruelty to animals—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture—That proof illustrated by a tale—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them—Their good and useful properties insisted on—Apology for the enco-

miums bestowed by the author on animals—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man—The groans of the creation shall have an end—A view taken of the restoration of all things—An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness—Conclusion.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleased
With melting airs, or martial, brisk, or grave:
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short; the rugged path,
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet, feeling present evils, while the past
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revoked,
That we might try the ground again where once
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
A father, whose authority, in show
When most severe, and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love: [lower,
Whose favor, like the clouds of spring, might
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allured
By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent
That converse, which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed
The playful humor; he could now endure
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss. [hold,
And, seeking grace to improve the prize they
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendor of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more that half suppress'd:
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head, [heart
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd, and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some to the fascination of a name [style
Surrender judgment hoodwink'd. Some the
Infatuates and through labyrinth and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought.
And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root.
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.
What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man?
Familiar with the effect, we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun, [less
How would the world admire! but speaks it
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise,
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle; but, seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.

Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
Through the imperceptible meandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy
Of unprolific winter has impress'd [touch
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And, more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they
have lost.
Then each, in its peculiar honors clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
In streaming gold; syringa, ivory pure;
The scentless and the scented rose; this red,
And of an humbler growth, the other* tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighboring cypress, or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave;
The lilac, various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if,
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved [all:
Which hue she most approved, she chose them
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odors, early and late;
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,
That scarce a leaf appears; mezereon too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths, investing every spray;
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd
leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—
These have been, and these shall be in their day;
And all this uniform, uncolor'd scene
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is nature's progress, when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes
The grand transition, that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are his,
That make so gay the solitary place,
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,
That cultivation glories in, are his.
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year;
He marks the bounds which Winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
Uninjured, with inimitable art;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.
Some say, that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements received a law, [force
From which they swerve not since; that under
Of that controling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who first
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
The incumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,
As too laborious and severe a task.
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
To span omnipotence, and measure might,
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.
But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire,
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow circling ages are his transient days;
Whose work is without labor; whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
With self-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods
That were not; and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One spirit, His
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odors, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
Of flavor or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.
Though winter had been none, had man been
true,
And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
So soon succeeding such an angry night,
And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove. [tuned
Who then, that has a mind well strung and
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favorite task,
Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and countermarching, with an eye
As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,

* The Guelder Rose.

Who pant with application misapplied
To trivial joys, and pushing ivory balls
Across a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
Its destined goal of difficult access.
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
To miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks
The polish'd counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.
Nor him who, by his vanity seduced,
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction: station'd there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease:
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it pass—but never bids.
Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarm'd
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel flippant, pert, and full of play:
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighboring beech; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.
The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one
That leads the dance a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may
To ecstacy too big to be suppress'd—
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind Nature graces every scene,
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.
Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call
Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind, [haunts
The creatures, summoned from their various
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
Or bounded only by a law, whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own, the law of universal love.
He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy;
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part, who rules the whole,
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause to fear.
But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change [heart,
Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! Every
Each animal, of every name, conceived
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
And, conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and as his perfect image loved.
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd;
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain:
The lion tells him—I am monarch here!
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,

Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man; those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof;
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driven to the slaughter, goaded as he runs,
To madness; while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the sufferer's fury, spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight performing horse:
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murderer on his back, and, push'd all day,
With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life,
To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows who needs so much!
Does law so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert)
The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honors of his matchless horse his own.
But many a crime deem'd innocent on earth
Is register'd in heaven; and these no doubt
Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charged the Jew
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise;
And when the bush-exploring boy that seized
The young, to let the parent bird go free;
Proved he not plainly that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
All, in the universal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on power of life and death.
But read the instrument, and mark it well:
The oppression of a tyrannous control
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute!
The Governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
The injurious trampler upon Nature's law,
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence
Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause;
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed,
(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.
Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd; and his chance was as he went
To join a traveller, of far different note,
Evander, famed for piety, for years
Deserving honor, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.
The charity that warm'd his heart was moved
At sight of the man monster. With a smile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
"And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man
Exclaimed, "that me the lullabies of age,
And fantasies of dotards such as thou,
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
Need no such aids as superstition lends,
To steel their hearts against the dread of death."
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,
And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought
Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave.
But though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
By medicine well applied, but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enraged the more by what might have reform'd
His horrible intent, again he sought
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,
With sounding whip, and rowels dyed in blood.
But still in vain. The Providence that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beast,
Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake.
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
Incurable obduracy evinced, [earn'd
His rage grew cool; and pleased perhaps to have
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of some complacence he resumed
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, still where he was left
Fix'd motionless, and petrified with dread.
So on they fared. Discourse on other themes
Ensuing seem'd to obliterate the past;
And tamer far for so much fury shown,
(As is the course of rash and fiery men,)
The rude companion smiled, as if transform'd.
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of power divine [wrath,
Was now to learn that Heaven, though slow to
Is never with impunity defied.
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,
Rush'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, stood.
At once the shock unseated him: he flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and, immersed

Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
The death he had deserved, and died alone.
So God wrought double justice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
I would not enter on my list of friends (sense,
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path:
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness, and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonor'd and defiled in most,
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it in his turn.
Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which, having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable; and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on theirs.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in
theirs,
Are oftimes vanquish'd and thrown far behind.
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach and must despair to learn.
But learn we might if not too proud to stoop
To quadruped instructors, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too.
Rarely exemplified among ourselves—
Attachment never to be wean'd or changed
By any change of fortune; proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for small,
And trivial favors, lasting as the life
And glistening even in the dying eye.
Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honor; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(O wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
(For was it less, what heathen would have dared
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honor of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
It but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel? Who, that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him; and while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy book, from whom it came,
Was never meant, was never used before,
To backram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe;
And, with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of the offence rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House, [third,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George!
—Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,
When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made
The idol of our worship while he lived
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre, too small, shall suffocate
Its squeezed contents and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified: for there some noble lord [bunch,
Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak, [stare,
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp and
To show the world how Garrick did not act—
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety had still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming
wreaths:
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas a hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
Doubtless much edified, and all refresh'd.
—Man praises man. The rabble all alive,
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day

A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy;
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.
Encomium in old time was poet's work;
But poets, having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand;
And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down
The vale of Nature, where it creeps and winds
Among her lovely works with a secure
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of Nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest;
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious in his chariot paved with love;
And what his storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels,
To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labor, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field [lean,
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring,
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream,
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;
That creeping pestilence is driven away;
The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not: the pure uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations: and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;
See Salem built, the labor of a God;
Bright as a sun, the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;*
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the farthest west;
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joys,
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.

Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were
Perfect, and all must be at length restored. [once
So God has greatly purposed; who would else
In his dishonor'd works himself endure
Dishonor, and be wrong'd without redress.
Haste, then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
A world that does not dread and hate his law
And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers;
And e'en the joy that haply some poor heart
Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

From touch of human lips, at best impure.
O for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
That govern all things here, shouldering aside
The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her
To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men:
Where Violence shall never lift the sword,
Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:
Where he, that fills an office, shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good [speak
More than the perquisite: where Law shall
Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts
And Equity; not jealous more to guard
A worthless form, than to decide aright:—
Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of Love!

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood. [hearts
Thy saints proclaim thee king; and in their
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee king; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent, long desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,
And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes;
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside,
As useless, to the moles and to the bats. [praised;
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are
Who, constant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind, and in love with darkness! yet e'en these
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who kneel
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!
So fares thy church. But how thy church may
fare [preach,
The world takes little thought. Who will may
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war [hearts.
With Conscience and with thee. Lust in their
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other: stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down
The features of the last degenerate times,
Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man whose life e'en now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace,
the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view;
And, occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them
not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies; and such he deems
Her honors, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in Contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from
earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be revealed.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,
And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
That flutters least is longest on the wing.
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
His warfare is within. There unfatigued
His fervent spirit labors. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself.
And never-withering wreaths, compared with
which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When, Isaac-like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at even-tide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, an idler in the best,
If, author of no mischief and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an encumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere, though humble, if that humble
sphere
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which at least a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe;
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country, recompenses well
The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.
The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,

Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
But he may boast, what few that win it can,
That, if his country stand not by his skill,
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite Refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
Because that world adopts it. If it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and, for decorum sake,
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling; and that vice,
Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,
Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flowers
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care
Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and so, at last,
My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It shall not grieve me then that once, when call'd
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon, to please her more,
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,
Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit: [true,
Roved far, and gather'd much: some harsh, 'tis
Pick'd from the thorns and briars of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth;
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
But all is in His hand, whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinckling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart;
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dear Joseph—five-and-twenty years ago—
Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And were I call'd to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.
Whence comes it then, that, in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?
No; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.
Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlor door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overawed
Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—
Nay—stay at home—you're always going out.
'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—
For what?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.—
A friend! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—
Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.
And fetch my cloak; for though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.
I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps his confidence, just then betray'd, [made,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he
Perhaps 'twas mere good humor gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth,
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain;
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun;)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.
Oh, happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law like that which I relate
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

TIROCINIUM; OR, A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.—PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης νεων τροφαι.—DIOG. LAERT.

To the Rev. William Cawthorne Unwin, Rector of Stock in Essex, the tutor of his two sons, the following poem, recommending private tuition in preference to an education at school, is inscribed by his affectionate friend.

WILLIAM COWPER.

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.

It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labor of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a freeborn will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendor, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom all her own.
For her the memory fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from every distant age;
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more;
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil;
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged;
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.
For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,
The present muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife [life,
That Grace and Nature have to wage through
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.
Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair Sun, and his attendant Earth?
And, when descending he resigns the skies,
Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
And owns her power on every shore he laves?
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their first career?
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze;
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
Power misemploy'd, munificence misplaced
Had not its Author dignified the plan,
And crown'd it with the majesty of man.
Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws,
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
To press the important question on his heart,
"Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;
Endued with reason only to descry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
The force he spends against their fury vain;
And if, soon after having burnt, by turns,
With every lust with which frail Nature burns,
His being end where death dissolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
And, useless while he lives, and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.
Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains;
But truths on which depend our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
Down to the sunset of their latest day,
Then perish on futurity's wide shore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that Heaven required of human kind,
And all the plan their destiny design'd, [blame,
What none could reverence all might justly
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
But reason heard, and nature well perused,
At once the dreaming mind is disabused.
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect His attributes who placed them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind,
'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose to invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Received his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he stands arrayed;
That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,
He too might make his author's wisdom clear,

Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
Suffer his justice in a world to come.
This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.
In early days the conscience has in most
A quickness, which in later life is lost:
Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
Or guilty soon relenting into tears.
Too careless often, as our years proceed, [read,
What friends we sort with, or what books we
Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare;
And wisely store the nursery by degrees [ease.
With wholesome learning, yet acquired with
Neatly secured from being soil'd or torn
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
A book (to please us at a tender age
Tis call'd a book, though but a single page)
Presents the prayer the Saviour deign'd to teach,
Which children use, and parsons—when they
Lisping our syllables, we scramble next [preach.
Through moral narrative, or sacred text;
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd
man: [plain,
Points which, unless the Scripture made them
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
Oh thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple
style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
Witty, and well employed, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his slighted word;
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;
Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober grey,
Revere the man whose PILGRIM marks the road,
And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.
'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
Their childhood pleased them at a riper age;
The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy,
And not with curses on his heart, who stole
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
The stamp of artless piety impress'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
The youth, now bearded and yet pert and raw,
Regards with scorn, though once received with
And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies, [awe;
That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,
Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Assert the native evil of his heart,
His pride resents the charge, although the proof*
Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough
Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
The young apostate sickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

* See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,
Opposed against the pleasures nature loves!
While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
Try now the merits of this blest exchange
Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
Time was, he closed as he began the day,
With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a consistent part;
Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
A power confess'd so lately on his knees.
But now farewell all legendary tales,
The shadows fly, philosophy prevails;
Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves;
Religion makes the free by nature slaves.
Priests have invented, and the world admired
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired;
Till Reason, now no longer overawed, [fraud;
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy
And, common sense diffusing real day,
The meteor of the Gospel dies away.
Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
Learn from expert inquirers after truth;
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
Is not to find what they profess to seek.
And thus, well tutor'd only while we share
A mother's lectures and a nurse's care;
And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,*
But sound religion sparingly enough;
Our early notices of truth disgraced,
Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.
Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;
That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste
For loose expense and fashionable waste
Should prove your ruin, and his own at last;
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise,
Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten,
In infidelity and lewdness men.
There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
That authors are most useful pawn'd or sold;
That pedantry is all that schools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
There waiter Dick, with bacchanalian lays,
Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
Detain their adolescent charge too long;
The management of tiros of eighteen
Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
The stout tall captain, whose superior size
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,
With them is courage; his effrontery wit.
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring
schemes, [themes.
Transport them, and are made their favorite
In little bosoms such achievements strike
A kindred spark: they burn to do the like.

* The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

Thus, half accomplish'd ere he yet begin
To show the peeping down upon his chin;
And, as maturity of years comes on,
Made just the adept that you design'd your son;
To ensure the perseverance of his course,
And give your monstrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,
Where no regard of ordinance is shown
Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him no doubt,
Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,
Nor gambling practices can find it out.
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:
Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think:
And such an age as ours balks no expense,
Except of caution and of common sense;
Else sure notorious fact, and proof so plain,
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those who, with what care they can,
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan;
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
A ubiquarian presence and control,
Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,
Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd?
Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon have struck yourselves.
Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endured endure,
Lest power exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth;
And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory, bright as that of all the signs.
Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines.
Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
As set the midnight riot in a blaze;
And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
Say, muse, (for education made the song,
No muse can hesitate, or linger long,)
What causes move us, knowing, as we must,
That these *ménageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?
Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the play-place of our early days;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd;
The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heartfelt glee;
And tells them as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;
Then turning, he regales his listening wife
With all the adventures of his early life;
His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern-bills, and spouting plays;
What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck to escape;
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his frolics, ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame,)
He gives the local bias all its sway;
Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,
And destines their bright genius to be shown
Just in the scene where he display'd his own.
The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah, happy designation, prudent choice,
The event is sure; expect it, and rejoice!
Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child,
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,
Are best disposed of where with most success
They may acquire that confident address,
Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With so much reason, all expect from them.
But families of less illustrious fame,
Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
Whose heirs, their honors none, their income small,
Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
What dream they of, that, with so little care
They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
They dream of little Charles or William graced
With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;
They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
The father, who designs his babe a priest,
Dreams him episcopally such at least;
And, while the playful jockey scours the room
Briskly, astride upon the parlor broom,
In fancy sees him more superbly ride
In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
Events improbable and strange as these,
Which only a parental eye forsees,
A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
But how? resides such virtue in that air,
As must create an appetite for prayer?

And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for such a prize should feel,
To take the lead and be the foremost still
In all true worth and literary skill?
"Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught
The knowledge of the World, and dull of thought!
Church ladders are not always mounted best
By learned clerks and Latinists profess'd.
The exalted prize demands an upward look,
Not to be found by poring on a book.
Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
Is more than adequate to all I seek.
Let erudition grace him, or not grace,
I give the bauble but the second place;
His wealth, fame, honors, all that I intend,
Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.
A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,
Shall give him consequence, heal all defects
His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—
There dawns the splendor of his future years:
In that bright quarter his propitious skies
Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
Your Lordship, and Your Grace! what school can teach
A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
What need of Homer's verse or Tully's prose,
Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?
Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
Who starve upon a dog's ear'd Pentateuch,
The parson knows enough who knows a duke."
Egregious purpose! worthily begun
In barbarous prostitution of your son;
Press'd on his part by means that would disgrace
A scrivener's clerk, or footman out of place,
And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,
In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
It may succeed: and if his sins should call
For more than common punishment, it shall;
The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
Least qualified in honor, learning, worth,
To occupy a sacred, awful post,
In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
The royal letters are a thing of course,
A king, that would, might recommend his horse;
And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your bishop! well he plays his part,
Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church furniture at best;
To live estranged from God his total scope,
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
But, fair although and feasible it seem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence, that seems concern'd to exempt
The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;
And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
Besides, school friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;
The most disinterested and virtuous minds,
In early years connected time unbinds;
New situations give a different cast
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste:
And he, that seem'd our counterpart at first,
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are, at best, but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known;
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.
Our public hives of puerile resort,
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass—
That with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
Contributes most, perhaps, to enhance their fame;
And emulation is its specious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns;
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labors to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth;
And, felt alike by each, advances both:
But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt:
Hurt too perhaps for life; for early wrong
Done to the nobler part, affects it long;
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
If you can crown a discipline, that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.
Connexion form'd for interest, and endear'd
By selfish views, thus censured and cashier'd;
And emulation, as engendering hate,
Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate;
The props of such proud seminaries fall,
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
Great schools rejected then as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be managed well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise?
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
I praise a school as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dress'd,
"Whate'er is best administer'd is best."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well,
Then ask not, whether limited or large?
But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?

If anxious only that their boys may learn,
While morals languish, a despised concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame,
Different in size, but in effect the same.
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most;
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they seek is easiest found;
Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
If shrewd, and if a well-constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill;
As, wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will;
The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share.
But if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than loose and gay,
Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;
Though want of due restraint alone have bred
The symptoms that you see with so much dread;
Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
Oh! 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,
By all whom sentiment has not abused;
New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
Of those who never feel in the right place;
A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,
Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;
A father blest with an ingenuous son.
Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,
Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?
He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
To take in childish plays a childish part;
But bends his sturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy:
Then why resign into a stranger's hand
A task as much within your own command,
That God and nature, and your interest too,
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?
This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
The indented stick, that loses day by day,
Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away
Bears witness long ere his dismission come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless, and safe, and natural, as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change;
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,
His favorite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chill'd into respect.
Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,
Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired?
Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling
And better never learn'd, or left behind. [mind,
Add too that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again;
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardless ears.
Like caterpillars dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race;
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So numerous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy;
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage;
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend;
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions, and control their tide;
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
To impress a value, not to be erased, [waste.
On moments squander'd else, and running all to
And seems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimproved those many moments fly?
And is he well content his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind,
But conjugated verbs and nouns declined?
For such is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hackneys in the schooling trade;
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax, truly, but with little more;
Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,
Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
To improve this diet, at no great expense,
With savory truth and wholesome common sense;
To lead his son, for prospects of delight,
To some not steep, though philosophic, height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect or a flower
Such microscopic proof of skill and power,
As, hid from ages past, God now displays
To combat atheists with in modern days;
To spread the earth before him, and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;
And, more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire. [pears,
Such knowledge, gain'd betimes, and which ap-
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,

Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have seen—
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.
Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
Too busy to intend a meaner care
Than how to enrich thyself, and next thine heir;
Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart:—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men;
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force;
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please;
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts;
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;
Unpatronized, and therefore little known;
Wise for himself and his few friends alone—
In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee;
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth;
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
The force of discipline when back'd by love;
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind inform'd, his morals undefiled.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his speech with meannesses, design'd
By footman Tom for witty and refined.
There, in his commerce, with the liveried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd;
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
(And they that can afford the expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,)
Great cause occurs to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand;
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And, as thou wouldst the advancement of thine
In all good faculties beneath his care, [heir
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant upon all his future pains;
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals;
But recollect that he has sense, and feels;
And that, possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And, if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit;
Offend not him whom modesty restrains
From reparte, with jokes that he disdains;
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath;
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.—
And, trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired, or bound to teach;
Much trash unutter'd, and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.
But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honorable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side;
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That anything but vice could win thy love;—
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chain'd to the routs that she frequents for life;
Who, just when industry begins to snore, [door;
Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst;
Not very sober though, nor very chaste;
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifler vain, and empty of all good;—
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)
May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd:
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain;
Or, if it enter, soon starved out again:
Where all the attention of his faithful host,
Discreetly limited to two at most,
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air:
Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.—
But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead!
Whom care and cool deliberation suit
Not better much than spectacles a brute;
Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment whose, or where;
Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay to have any of their own.
But courage man! methought the Muse replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide:
The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
And, while on public nurseries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,

Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice;
And some, perhaps, who, busy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their dearest care,
(Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach,)
Will need no stress of argument to enforce
The expedience of a less adventurous course:
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;
But they have human feelings—turn to them.
To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,
Securely placed between the small and great,
Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains,
Who, wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
Look round you on a world perversely blind;
See what contempt is fallen on human kind;
See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
Long lines of ancestry, renown'd of old,
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;
See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge
Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made;
Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves
With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;
See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,
Civited fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
Now flush'd with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
Men well endow'd, of honorable parts,
Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still;
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark:
As here and there a twinkling star descried
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say, My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
And trust for safety to a stranger's care;
What character, what turn thou wilt assume
From constant converse with I know not whom;
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose;
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids;
Free too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course;
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, Go thither, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way;
Then, only govern'd by the self-same rule
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
And hopest thou not, ('tis every father's hope,)
That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand;
If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure,
From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last;
Or, if he prove unkind, (as who can say
But, being man, and therefore frail, he may?)
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.
Oh, barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' th' land;
Or thrown them up to livery-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?
A captious question, sir, (and yours is one,)
Deserves an answer similar, or none.
Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?
Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.
From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its color draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
And though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let*,
Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime,) I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS, OR TITHING TIME AT STOCK IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a Country Clergyman, complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong,
The troubles of a worthy priest,
The burden of my song.

The priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year:
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe,
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears,
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth the sorrow of such days
Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

"And how does miss and madam do,
The little boy and all?"
"All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?"

The dinner comes, and down they sit,
Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.
"Come, neighbors, we must wag"—
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
And one of storms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, "A rarer man than you
In pulpit none shall hear:
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
You sell it plaguy dear."

O why are farmers made so coarse,
Or clergy made so fine?
A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
'Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum
Without the clowns that pay.

SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren Hastings, Esq., in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears [peers,
(Attentive when thou read'st) of England's
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy generous powers, but silence honor'd thee,
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside [sweet
Both heart and head; and couldst with music
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets,* (poets, by report,
Not oft so well agree,)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honor thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labors of their own.

We therefore pleased extol thy song,
Though various, yet complete,
Rich in embellishment as strong,
And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise
Though could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundiced eye;

* Alluding to the poem, by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied these lines.

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.

ON

MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS.

The birds put off their every hue
To dress a room for Montagu.
The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His rainbows and his starry eyes,
The pheasant plumes, which round enfold
His mantling neck with downy gold,
The cock his arch'd tail's azure show;
And, river-blanch'd, the swan his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
Where rises, and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower,
Nor blasts, that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But, screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendor ever new
Safe with protecting Montagu.
To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favor at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigor move,
Like Pallas springing arm'd from Jove—
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground.
Which Labor of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile—
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrude on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright—
Well tutor'd Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind—
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar,)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day;
The Plume and Poet both we know
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

VERSES,

Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez.

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts, that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestow'd upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is the glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

ON

OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE

RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

Oh, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age:
Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;

Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark!
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk!

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE,

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill and a wig full of learning;
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side, (as a lawyer knows how,)
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes;
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.,

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

Round Thurlow's head in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,
And Genius shed his rays.

See! with united wonder cried
The experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age!

Discernment, eloquence, and grace,
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise;
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest, where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deem'd his own.

ODE TO PEACE.

Come, peace of mind, delightful guest!
Return, and make thy downy nest
Once more in this sad heart:
Nor riches I nor power pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view;
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From avarice and ambition free,
And pleasure's fatal wiles?
For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The heaven that thou alone canst make?
And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove and the sequester'd shed,
To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
Whate'er I loved before;
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
Farewell! we meet no more?

HUMAN FRAILTY.

Weak and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain;
But Passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part;
Virtue engages his assent,
But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
Through all his art we view;
And, while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
To reach the distant coast;
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

Rebellion is my theme all day;
I only wish 'twould come
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)
A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
On t'other side the Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But O! for him my fancy culls
The choicest flowers she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we patriots had
Such strings for all who need 'em—
What! hang a man for going mad!
Then farewell British freedom.

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS., BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more,
The well-judged purchase, and the gift
That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
The loss was his alone;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of his own.

ON THE SAME.

When wit and genius meet their doom
In all devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCAISY DETECTED.*

Thus says the prophet of the Turk,
Good Mussulman, abstain from pork;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
Had he the sinful part express'd,
They might with safety eat the rest;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarr'd;
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head;
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.
You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
Renounce the world—the preacher cries.
We do—a multitude replies.
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play;
Some love a concert, or a race;
And others shooting, and the chase.
Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd,
Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallow'd;
Each thinks his neighbor makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he:
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

Ye nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favorites shed,
O share Maria's grief!

* It may be proper to inform the reader, that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the *Leeds Journal*, without the author's privity.

Her favorite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung;
And, though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blest,
Well taught he all the sounds express'd
Of flageolet or flute.

The honors of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse
No eat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest shaven wood,
Large built, and latticed well.

Well latticed—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole: all seem'd secure:
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
And badger-color'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturb'd poor Bully rest,
In sleep he seem'd to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went—
Ah, muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
He left poor Bully's beak.

O had he made that too his prey;
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well I, wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—
So when, by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

The rose had been wash'd, just washed in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd;
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left, with regret,
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was,
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile;
And the tear, that is wip'd with a little address,
May be followed perhaps by a smile.

THE DOVES.

Reasoning at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wander'd late,
And heard the voice of love;
The turtle thus address'd her mate,
And soothed the listening dove:

Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth
Shall cheer our latest age:

While innocence without disguise,
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
And mine can read them there;

Those ills, that wait on all below,
Shall ne'er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so,
As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolved a union form'd for life
Death never shall divide.

But oh! if, fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought,)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightnings from on high,
Or kites with cruel beak;

Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widow'd heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird
Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,
And, on her wicker-work high mounted,
Her chickens prematurely counted,
(A fault philosophers might blame,
If quite exempted from the same,)
Enjoy'd at ease the genial day;
'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,
The legislature call'd it May.
But suddenly a wind, as high
As ever swept a winter sky,
Shook the young leaves about her ears,
And fill'd her with a thousand fears,
Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
And spread her golden hopes below.
But just at eve the blowing weather
And all her fears were hush'd together:
And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
'Tis over, and the brood is safe;
(For ravens, though, as birds of omen,
They teach both conjurors and old women
To tell us what is to befall,
Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
The morning came, when neighbor Hodge,
Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,
And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair.
Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours:
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread.
Found oft'nest in what least we dread,
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INKGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains,
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning;

Ah why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
By constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
It floats a vapor now,
Impell'd through regions dense and rare,
By all the winds that blow.

Ordain'd perhaps, ere summer flies,
Combined with millions more,
To form an iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
Both speed their journey with a restless stream,
The silent pace, with which they steal away,
No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay;
Alike irrevocable both when past,
And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
Though each resemble each in every part,
A difference strikes at length the musing heart;
Streams never flow in vain; where streams abound,
How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd!
But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream that winds through yonder glade,
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng;
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destined course;
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes.
Pure-bosom'd as that watery glass,
And heaven reflected in her face.

THE POET'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have every good
For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad, and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favor then not yet possess'd
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already blest,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part:
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish on some fair future day,
Which fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfill'd.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau*
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear, that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable;
And e'en the child who knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter,
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.
It chanced then, on a winter's day,
But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a bullfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And, silence publicly enjoin'd,
Deliver'd briefly thus his mind:
My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet.
A finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado,
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?
Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well express'd
Influenced mightily the rest,
All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
But, though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow.
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learn'd in future to be wiser,
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?

THE DOG AND THE WATER LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs* adorn'd with every grace
That spaniel found for me,)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd;
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And plunging, left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, the world I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed:

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine,
To Him who gives me all.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

What Nature, alas! has denied
To the delicate growth of our isle,
Art has in a measure supplied,
And winter is deck'd with a smile.
See, Mary, what beauties I bring
From the shelter of that sunny shed,
Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,
Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
Where Flora is still in her prime,
A fortress to which she retreats,
From the cruel assaults of the clime.
While earth wears a mantle of snow,
These pinks are as fresh and as gay
As the fairest and sweetest that blow
On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
The frowns of a sky so severe;
Such Mary's true love, that has lived
Through many a turbulent year.
The charms of the late-blowing rose
Seem graced with a livelier hue,
And the winter of sorrow best shows
The truth of a friend such as you.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

An Oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded:—
Ah, hapless wretch! condemn'd to dwell
Forever in my native shell;
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease;
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now in the water, and now out.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast rooted against every rub.
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough:
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied:
(When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants call'd sensitive grow there?
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses)
You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you:
For many a grave, and learned clerk
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—Well, tis more than one would think!
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't)
In being touch'd, and crying—Don't!
A poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.
And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong;
Your feelings in their full amount
Are all upon your own account.
You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
Complain of being thus exposed;
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat
Save when the knife is at your throat,
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.
And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,
If all the plants, that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all—not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love:
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.
His censure reach'd them as he dealt it
And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

Oh, happy shades—to me unblest!
Friendly to peace, but not to me!
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders, quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if anything could please.

But fix'd unalterable Care
Foregoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness everywhere,
And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
While Peace possess'd these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley musing, slow;
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not like me to nourish woe!

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
Alike admonish not to roam;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

The lady thus address'd her spouse—
What a mere dungeon is this house;
By no means large enough; and was it,
Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen.
Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark:
No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four.
You are so deaf, the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)
You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear?
Dismiss poor Harry! he replies;
Some people are more nice than wise:
For one slight trespass all this stir?
What if he did ride whip and spur,
'Twas but a mile—your favorite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.
Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
Child! I am rather hard of hearing—
Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl:
I tell you, you can't hear at all!
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
No matter if you hear or no.
Alas! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be fear'd,
As to be wantonly incurr'd,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On every trivial provocation?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something every day they live
To pity, and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish or a sense impair'd,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.
The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention;
But lives, when that exterior grace,
Which first inspired the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will with sympathy endure
Those evils it would gladly cure:
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression,
Shows love to be a mere profession;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there One who reigns on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers—wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer—no.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
Crossing in your barks the main,
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart,
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart;

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the color of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are
knaves; [and groans,
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?

Especially sugar, so needful we see?
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains;
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be
said;
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd,
"Oh no! [go;
What! rob our good neighbor! I pray you don't
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread,
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

"You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have;
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If, not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom pondered—"I see they
will go;
Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!
Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind will do him no good.

"If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from
the tree;
But, since they will take them, I think I'll go too,
He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize;
He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan;
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that on ocean afloat,
Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
And the fresh blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impressed me with awe,
Ne'er taught me by woman before:
She sat, and a shield at her side
Shed light like a sun on the waves,
And smiling divinely, she cried—
"I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then, raising her voice to a strain
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain
Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds which had over us hung
Fled, chas'd by her melody clear,
And methought, while she liberty sung,
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as a sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as, approaching the land,
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And, the moment the monster expir'd,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspir'd.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide,
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which serv'd my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves,
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN;

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear:
Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we.

He soon replied, I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calendrer
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, that's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddletree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, fair and softly, John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around,
He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke,
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!
They all at once did cry;
The dinner waits, and we are tired:
Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calendrer's
The horse at last stood still.

The calendrer, amazed to see
His neighbor in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calendrer
In merry guise he spoke:

I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.

The calendrer, right glad to find,
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight came he with hat and wig;
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit:
My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.

Said John, It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,
I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With posthoy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:—

Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheer'd the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended.
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glowworm by his spark;

So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent—
Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the self-same Power divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.
The songster heard his short oration,
And, warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.
Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern;
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other;
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.
Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

AN EPISTLE TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

Madam,
A stranger's purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate, and not to praise.
To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by craft for folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.
The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No traveller ever reach'd that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain,
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread,
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end. [prove,
But he, who knew what human hearts would
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls his grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, "Go spend them in the vale of tears."
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams, that murmur there!
These flowing from the fount of grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys;
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys;
An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own;
And many a pang, experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, sin:
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim:
And every moment's calm, that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.
Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine—
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

TO THE REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

Unwin, I should but ill repay
The kindness of a friend,
Whose worth deserves as warm a lay
As ever friendship penn'd,
Thy name omitted in a page
That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union form'd, as mine with thee,
Not rashly, or in sport,
May be as fervent in degree
And faithful in its sort,
And may as rich in comfort prove,
As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though differing in its kind,
The stock whereon it grows,
With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart;
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

TO THE REVEREND MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

The swallows in their torpid state
Compose their useless wing,
And bees in hives as idly wait
The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,
The wildest wind that blows,
Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,
Secure of their repose.

But man, all feeling and awake,
The gloomy scene surveys;
With present ills his heart must ache,
And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter halting o'er the mead,
Bids me and Mary mourn;
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
And whispers your return.

Then April, with her sister May,
Shall chase him from the bowers,
And weave fresh garlands every day,
To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear that speaks regret
Of happier times appear,
A glimpse of joy, that we have met,
Shall shine and dry the tear.

CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON,

(NOW MRS. COURTNEY.)

She came—she is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again;
The sun of that moment is set,
And seems to have risen in vain.
Catharina has fled like a dream—
(So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
But has left a regret and esteem
That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paused under many a tree,
And much she was charm'd with a tone,
Less sweet to Maria and me,
Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
Could infuse into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here;
For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is when the mind is endued
With a well-judging taste from above,
Then, whether embellish'd or rude,
'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite;
But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home;
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam;
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A hermit, (or if 'chance you hold
That title now too trite and old,)
A man, once young, who lived retired
As hermit could have well desired,
His hours of study closed at last,
And finish'd his concise repast,
Stoppled his cruise, replaced his book,
Within its customary nook,
And, staff in hand, set forth to share
The sober cordial of sweet air,
Like Isaac, with a mind applied
To serious thought at evening-tide.
Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees, that fringed his hill,
Shades slanting at the close of day,
Chill'd more his else delightful way.
Distant a little mile he spied
A western bank's still sunny side,
And right toward the favor'd place
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
In hope to bask a little yet,
Just reach'd it when the sun was set.
Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
Learns something from whate'er occurs—
And hence, he said, my mind computes
The real worth of man's pursuits.
His object chosen, wealth or fame,
Or other sublunary game,
Imagination to his view
Presents it deck'd with every hue
That can seduce him not to spare
His powers of best exertion there,
But youth, health, vigor to expend
On so desirable an end.
Ere long approach life's evening shades
The glow that fancy gave it fades;
And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
That first engaged him in the chase.
True, answer'd an angelic guide,
Attendant at the senior's side—
But whether all the time it cost,
To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
Must be decided by the worth
Of that which call'd his ardor forth.
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,
Must cause him shame or discontent;
A vicious object still is worse,
Successful there, he wins a curse;
But he, whom e'en in life's last stage
Endeavors laudable engage,
Is paid at least in peace of mind,
And sense of having well design'd;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His sun precipitate descend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompense his mere intent.
No virtuous wish can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

The greenhouse is my summer seat;
My shrubs displaced from that retreat
Enjoy'd the open air;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing,
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast,
With force not easily suppress'd;
And Dick felt some desires,
That, after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was still confined;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say
You must not live alone—
Nor would he quit that chosen stand
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Return'd him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys
Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,
Fandango, ball, and rout!
Blush, when I tell you how a bird,
A prison with a friend preferr'd
To liberty without.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

There is a field, through which I often pass,
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
Reserved to solace many a neighboring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck, or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.
Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed,
Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away,
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack,
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,
With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,
For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.
The sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,
And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-rais'd horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick* and all Dinglederry* rang. [press'd
Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom
The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;
Nor noise was heard, but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.
But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again;
But recollecting, with a sudden thought, [nought,
That flight in circles urged advanced them
They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.
The man to solitude accustom'd long,
Perceives in everything that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name;
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.
This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.
Awhile they mused; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzled out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd.
Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prison-house below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
For such a cause to feel the slightest fear.

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders
All night, me resting quiet in the fold. [roll'd
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The ass; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
And, being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
Might be supposed to clamor for a guide.
But ah! those dreadful yells, what soul can hear,
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear?
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd
And fang'd with brass the demons are abroad;
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
That, life to save, we leap into the pit.
Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.
How! leap into the pit our life to save?
To save our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it less? Contemplate first
The depth how awful! falling there, we burst:
Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall
In part abate, that happiness were small;
For with a race like theirs, no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
Meantime noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may, [tongues
And rush those other sounds, that seem by
Of demons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.
While thus she spake, I fainter heard the
For Reynard, close attended at his heels [peals,
By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,
Through mere good fortune, took a different
course.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought with an indignant mein,
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief.

Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow:
Rush'd to battle, fought, and died;
Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you.

HEROISM.

There was a time when Ætna's silent fire
Slept unperceiv'd, the mountain yet entire;
When, conscious of no danger from below,
She tower'd a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
The blooming groves that girdled her around.
Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
In peace upon her sloping sides matured.
When on a day, like that of the last doom,
A conflagration laboring in her womb,
She teem'd and heaved with an infernal birth,
That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
Dark and voluminous the vapors rise,
And hang their horrors in the neighboring skies,
While through the Stygian veil, that blots the day,
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
But oh! what muse, and in what powers of song,
Can trace the torrent as it burns along?
Havoc and devastation in the van,
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man;
Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.
Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
See it an uniform'd and idle mass;
Without a soil to invite the tiller's care,
Or blade that might redeem it from despair.
Yet time at length (what will not time achieve?)
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
O charming Paradise of short-lived sweets!

The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound:
Again the mountain feels the imprison'd foe,
Again pours ruin on the vale below.
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
That only future ages can restore.
Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honor draws,
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence;
Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires!
Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,
And tells you where you have a right to reign,
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
Studious of peace, their neighbor's and their own.
Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you!
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road;
At every step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness.
Famine, and pestilence, her firstborn son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun;
And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,
And folly pays resound at your return.
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
Of heartfelt joys, succeeds not soon again:
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.
Yet man, laborious man by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease,)
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.
Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part;
And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,
That wealth within is ruin at the door.
What are ye, monarchs, laurell'd heroes, say,
But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?
Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe;
And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
To prove you there destroyers as ye are.
O place me in some heaven-protected isle,
Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile;
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;
Where Power secures what Industry has won;
Where to succeed is not to be undone;
A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign.

ON THE

RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

OUT OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here:
Who bidst me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.
My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capp'd,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made, [laid;
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd:
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks
That humor interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar;"*
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
But oh, the thought, that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

FRIENDSHIP.

What virtue, or what mental grace
But men unqualified and base
Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes the noble part
Of liberality of heart,
And dullness of discretion.

If every polish'd gem we find,
Illuminating heart or mind,
Provoke to imitation;
No wonder friendship does the same,
That jewel of the purest flame,
Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend
The requisites that form a friend,
A real and a sound one;
Nor any fool, he would deceive,
But prove as ready to believe,
And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,
An error soon corrected—
For who but learns in riper years
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,
And taken trash for treasure,
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair;
Nor is it wise complaining,
If, either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,
That stands on sordid interest,
Or mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may awhile subsist
Between the sot and sensualist,
For vicious ends connected.

Who seek a friend should come disposed
To exhibit in full bloom disclosed,
The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks,
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,
And equal truth on either side,
And constantly supported;
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse
Another of sinister views,
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice?
It is indeed above all price,
And must be made the basis;
But every virtue of the soul
Must constitute the charming whole,
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
By ceaseless sharp corrosion;
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
In hopes of permanent delight—
The secret just committed,
Forgetting its important weight,
They drop through mere desire to prate,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If envy chance to creep in;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove an envious foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

* Garth.

As envy pines at good possess'd,
So jealousy looks forth distress'd
On good that seems approaching;
And if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name
Unless belied by common fame,
Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
A tax upon their own just praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling,
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers will be sure to hear
The trumpet of contention;
Aspersion is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
And rush into dissension.

A friendship that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation,
Like hand-in-hand insurance-plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole,
Their humor yet so various—
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviation too,
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
Plebeians must surrender,
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
Obscurity with splendor.

Some are so placid and serene
(As Irish bogs are always green)
They sleep secure from waking;
And are indeed a bog that bears
Your unparticipated cares
Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life;
But friends that chance to differ
On points which God has left at large,
How freely will they meet and charge—
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend we seem
To adopt the chemist's golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish in due time made known
By trespass or omission;
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect, long hid from sight,
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
That constancy befits them,
Are observations on the case,
That savor much of common place,
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone
To finish a fine building—
The palace were but half complete,
If he could possibly forget
The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed
To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
First fixes our attention;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,
"Say little, and hear all you can."
Safe policy, but hateful—
So barren sands imbibe the shower
But render neither fruit nor flower,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,
Shall find me as reserved as he,
No subterfuge or pleading
Shall win my confidence again;
I will by no means entertain
A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
Of evils yet unmention'd—
May prove the task a task indeed,
In which 'tis much if we succeed,
However well intention'd.

Pursue the search, and you will find
Good sense and knowledge of mankind
To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

The noblest Friendship ever shown
The Saviour's history makes known,
Though some have turn'd and turn'd it;
And, whether being crazed or blind,
Or seeking with a biass'd mind,
Have not, it seems, discern'd it.

O Friendship! if my soul forego
Thy dear delights while here below,
To mortify and grieve me,
May I myself at last appear,
Unworthy, base and insincere,
Or may my friend deceive me!

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.

Go—thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
Aware of wintry storms,
And woodpeckers explore the sides
Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn
With frictions of her fleece;
And here I wander eve and morn,
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah!—I could pity thee exiled
From this secure retreat—
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;
Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess—therefore, go—

I care not whether east or north,
So I no more may find thee;
The angry muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee.

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

I RANSACK'D for a theme of song,
Much ancient chronicle, and long;
I read of bright embattled fields,
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast
Prowess to dissipate a host;
Through tomes of fable and of dream
I sought an eligible theme.
But none I found, or found them shared
Already by some happier bard.
To modern times, with truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied;
Here cities won, and fleets dispersed,
Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our fathers' triumphs and our own.
Thus as the bee from bank to bower,
Assiduous sips at every flower,
But rests on none till that be found
Where most nectareous sweets abound,
So I, from theme to theme display'd
In many a page historic, stray'd,
Siege after siege, fight after fight,
Contemplating with small delight,
(For feats of sanguinary hue
Not always glitter in my view,)
Till, settling on the current year,
I found the far-sought treasure near,
A theme for poetry divine,
A theme to ennoble even mine,
In memorable eighty-nine.
The spring of eighty-nine shall be
An æra cherish'd long by me,
Which joyful I will oft record,
And thankful at my frugal board;
For then the clouds of eighty-eight,
That threaten'd England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of heaven, that cried—Restore!
Chased, never to assemble more:
And for the richest crown on earth,
If valued by its wearer's worth,
The symbol of a righteous reign
Sat fast on George's brows again.
Then peace and joy again possess'd
Our Queen's long-agitated breast;
Such joy and peace as can be known
By sufferers like herself alone,
Who losing, or supposing lost,
The good on earth they valued most,
For that dear sorrow's sake forego
All hope of happiness below,
Then suddenly regain the prize,
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!
O Queen of Albion, queen of isles!
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
The eyes, that never saw thee, shine
With joy not unallied to thine;
Transports not chargeable with art
Illume the land's remotest part,
And strangers to the air of courts,
Both in their toils and at their sports,
The happiness of answer'd prayers,
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.
If they who on thy state attend,
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,
'Tis but the natural effect
Of grandeur that ensures respect;
But she is something more than queen
Who is beloved where never seen.

HYMN,

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
In heaven thy dwelling place,
From infants made the public care,
And taught to seek thy face.

Thanks for thy word, and for thy day,
And grant us, we implore,
Never to waste in sinful play
Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but O impart
To each desires sincere,
That we may listen with our heart,
And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the minds engage
Of older far than we,
What hope, that, at our heedless age,
Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if thou our spirits take
Under thy gracious sway,
Who canst the wisest wiser make,
And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,
A sun that ne'er declines,
And be thy mercies shower'd on those
Who placed us where it shines.

STANZAS.

SUBJOINED TO THE YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY OF THE PARISH OF ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON,* ANNO DOMINI 1787.

Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres.—HORACE.

Pale death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest trees we stand,
And some are mark'd to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
I pass'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

No present health can health ensure
For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

And O! that humble as my lot,
And scorn'd as is my strain,
These truths, though known, too much forgot,
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,
And, ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen!

* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Ritu feruntur.—HORACE.

Improve the present hour, for all beside
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from heaven inspired, as sure presage
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my punctual page,
And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
On which the press might stamp him next to die;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye!

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
In which he sports away the treasure now;
And prayer more seasonable than the noise
Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived! Could I prophetic say
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play;
But, naming none, the Voice now speaks to ALL.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade—
One falls—the rest, wide scatter'd with affright,
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,
Die self-accused of life run all to waste!

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones.
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit.—VIRG.
There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

"O MOST delightful hour by man
Experienced here below,
The hour that terminates his span,
His folly and his woe!

"Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
Again life's dreary waste,
To see again my day o'erspread
With all the gloomy past.

"My home henceforth is in the skies,
Earth, seas, and sun, adieu!
All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
I have no sight for you."

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd
Of faith's supporting rod,
Then breathed his soul into its rest,
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he fear'd,
He hated, hoped, and loved;
Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd,
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within;
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last
Call'd up from earth to heaven,
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be mine, each reader cries,
When my last hour arrives:
They shall be yours, my verse replies,
Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

Ne commonentem recta sperne.—BUCHANAN.
Despise not my good counsel.

He who sits from day to day
Where the prison'd lark is hung,
Heedless of his loudest lay,
Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
Nightly lifts his voice on high,
None, accustom'd to the sound,
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and clerk,
Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
Publishing to all aloud—
Soon the grave must be your home,
And your only suit, a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
Oft repeated in your ears,
Seems to sound too much in vain,
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd
Of such magnitude and weight,
Grow, by being oft impress'd,
Trivial as a parrot's prate.

Pleasure's call attention wins,
Hear it often as we may;
New as ever seem our sins,
Though committed every day.

Death and judgment, heaven and hell—
These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell
When some stranger is interr'd.

O then, ere the turf or tomb
Cover us from every eye,
Spirit of instruction, come,
Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!
VIRG.

Happy the mortal who has traced effects
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
And death and roaring hell's voracious fires!

Thankless for favors from on high,
Man thinks he fades too soon:
Though 'tis his privilege to die,
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
His blest concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
To ages, if he might.

To ages in a world of pain,
To ages where he goes
Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
Enamor'd of its harm!
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?
Why deem we death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
And covet longer woe?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft
Her tale of guilt renews:
Her voice is terrible though soft,
And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared
Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light, compared
With the approach of death.

'Tis judgment shakes him: there's the fear
That prompts the wish to stay:
He has incurr'd a long arrear,
And must despair to pay.

Pay! follow Christ, and all is paid;
His death your peace ensures;
Think on the grave where *he* was laid,
And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.
CIC. DE LEG.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

He lives who lives to God alone,
And all are dead beside;
For other source than God is none
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may:
To make his precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
Of giddy joys comprised,
Is falsely named, and no such thing,
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
Who only live to prove
For what poor toys they can disclaim
An endless life above?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel;
Much menaced, nothing dread;
Have wounds, which only God can heal,
Yet never ask his aid?

Who deem his house a useless place,
Faith, want of common sense;
And ardor in the Christian race,
A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day
Which God asserts his own
Dishonor with unhallow'd play,
And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd
On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unbless'd
With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want uncured
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!
Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,
And mercy cast away.

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

Time was when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew;
I perch'd at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains forever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel were all in vain,
And of a transient date;
For, caught and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon pass'd the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
And cure of every ill!
More cruelty could none express;
And I, if you had shown me less,
Had been your prisoner still.

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

The pine-apples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow;
A bee of most discerning taste
Perceived the fragrance as he pass'd,
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And search'd for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied;
But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light:
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimm'd his flight another way.
Methinks, I said, in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires;
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the pine-apple, and he
The silly unsuccessful bee.
The maid who views with pensive air
The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between!
Our dear delights are often such,
Exposed to view, but not to touch;
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pine-apples in frames;
With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers;
But they whom truth and wisdom lead
Can gather honey from a weed.

VERSES WRITTEN AT BATH, ON FINDING THE HEEL OF A SHOE.

Fortune! I thank thee: gentle goddess! thanks!
Not that my muse, though bashful, shall deny
She would have thank'd thee rather hadst thou cast
A treasure in her way; for neither meed
Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes,
And bowel-racking pains of emptiness,
Nor noontide feast, nor evening's cool repast,
Hopes she from this—presumptuous, though, perhaps
The cobbler, leather-carving artist! might.
Nathless she thanks thee and accepts thy boon,
Whatever; not as erst the fabled cock,
Vain-glorious fool! unknowing what he found,
Spurn'd the rich gem thou gavest him. Wherefore, ah!
Why not on me that favor, (worthier sure!)
Conferr'dst thou, goddess! Thou art blind thou say'st:
Enough!—thy blindness shall excuse the deed.

Nor does my muse no benefit exhale
From this thy scant indulgence!—even here
Hints worthy sage philosophy are found;
Illustrious hints, to moralize my song!
This ponderous heel of perforated hide
Compact, with pegs indented, many a row,
Haply (for such its massy form bespeaks)
The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown
Upbore: on this, supported oft, he stretch'd,
With uncouth strides, along the furrow'd glebe,
Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time
(What will not cruel time!) or a wry step
Sever'd the strict cohesion; when, alas!
He, who could erst, with even, equal pace,
Pursue his destined way with symmetry,
And some proportion form'd, now on one side
Curtail'd and maim'd, the sport of vagrant boys,
Cursing his frail supporter, treacherous prop!
With toilsome steps, and difficult, moves on.
Thus fares it oft with other than the feet
Of humble villager—the statesman thus,
Up the steep road where proud ambition leads,
Aspiring, first uninterrupted winds
His prosperous way; nor fears miscarriage foul,
While policy prevails, and friends prove true;
But, that support soon failing, by him left
On whom he most depended, basely left,
Betray'd, deserted; from his airy height
Headlong he falls; and through the rest of life
Drags the dull load of disappointment on.

1748.

AN ODE,

ON READING RICHARDSON'S HISTORY OF SIR CHARLES GRANDISON.

Say, ye apostate and profane,
Wretches, who blush not to disdain
Allegiance to your God,—
Did e'er your idly wasted love
Of virtue for her sake remove
And lift you from the crowd?

Would you the race of glory run,
Know, the devout, and they alone,
Are equal to the task:
The labors of the illustrious course
Far other than the unaided force
Of human vigor ask.

To arm against reputed ill
The patient heart too brave to feel
The tortures of despair:
Nor safer yet high-crested pride,
When wealth flows in with every tide
To gain admittance there.

To rescue from the tyrant's sword
The oppress'd; unseen and unimplored,
To cheer the face of woe;
From lawless insult to defend
An orphan's right—a fallen friend,
And a forgiven foe;

These, these distinguish from the crowd,
And these alone, the great and good,
The guardians of mankind;
Whose bosoms with these virtues heave,
O with what matchless speed they leave
The multitude behind!

Then ask ye from what cause on earth
Virtues like these derive their birth?
Derived from Heaven alone,
Full on that favor'd breast they shine,
Where faith and resignation join
To call the blessing down.

Such is that heart:—but while the muse
Thy theme, O Richardson, pursues,
Her feeble spirits faint:
She cannot reach, and would not wrong,
The subject for an angel's song,
The hero, and the saint!

1753.

AN EPISTLE TO ROBERT LLOYD, ESQ.

'Tis not that I design to rob
Thee of thy birthright, gentle Bob,
For thou art born sole heir and single
Of dear Mat Prior's easy jingle;
Not that I mean, while thus I knit
My threadbare sentiments together,
To show my genius or my wit,
When God and you know I have neither;
Or such as might be better shown
By letting poetry alone.
'Tis not with either of these views
That I presumed to address the muse:
But to divert a fierce banditti,
(Sworn foes to everything that's witty!)
That, with a black, infernal train,
Make cruel inroads in my brain,
And daily threaten to drive thence
My little garrison of sense;
The fierce banditti which I mean
Are gloomy thoughts led on by spleen.
Then there's another reason yet,
Which is, that I may fairly quit
The debt, which justly became due
The moment when I heard from you;
And you might grumble, crony mine,
If paid in any other coin;
Since twenty sheets of lead, God knows,
(I would say twenty sheets of prose,)
Can ne'er be deem'd worth half so much
As one of gold, and yours was such.
Thus, the preliminaries settled,
I fairly find myself pitchkettled,*
And cannot see, though few see better,
How I shall hammer out a letter.
First, for a thought—since all agree—
A thought—I have it—let me see—
'Tis gone again—plague on't! I thought
I had it—but I have it not.
Dame Gurton thus, and Hodge her son,
That useful thing, her needle, gone!
Rake well the cinders—sweep the floor,
And sift the dust behind the door;
While eager Hodge beholds the prize
In old grimalkin's glaring eyes:
And Gammer finds it, on her knees,
In every shining straw she sees.
This simile were apt enough;
But I've another, critic-proof!
The virtuoso thus, at noon,
Broiling beneath a July sun,

* Pitchkettled, a favorite phrase at the time when this Epistle was written, expressive of being puzzled, or what in the Spectator's time would have been called bamboozled.

The gilded butterfly pursues,
O'er hedge and ditch, through gaps and mews;
And, after many a vain essay,
To captivate the tempting prey,
Gives him at length the lucky pat,
And has him safe beneath his hat:
Then lifts it gently from the ground;
But, ah! 'tis lost as soon as found;
Culprit his liberty regains,
Flits out of sight, and mocks his pains.
The sense was dark; 'twas therefore fit
With simile to illustrate it;
But as too much obscures the sight,
As often as too little light,
We have our similes cut short,
For matters of more grave import.
That Matthew's numbers run with ease,
Each man of common sense agrees!
All men of common sense allow
That Robert's lines are easy too:
Where then the preference shall we place,
Or how do justice in this case?
Matthew (says Fame,) with endless pains
Smooth'd and refined the meanest strains;
Nor suffer'd one ill-chosen rhyme
To escape him at the idlest time;
And thus o'er all a lustre cast,
That while the language lives shall last.
A'nt please your ladyship (quoth I,)
For 'tis my business to reply;
Sure so much labor, so much toil,
Bespeak at least a stubborn soil:
Theirs be the laurel-wreath decreed,
Who both write well, and write full speed!
Who throw their Helicon about
As freely as a conduit spout!
Friend Robert, thus like *chien savant*
Lets fall a poem *en passant*,
Nor needs his genuine ore refine—
'Tis ready polish'd from the mine.

A TALE, FOUNDED ON A FACT,

WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1779.

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream
There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme;
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine in which he wrought for bread.
When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep!)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more;
As if the noblest of the feather'd kind
Were but for battle and for death design'd;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport to minds on cruelty intent;
It chanced (such chances Providence obey)
He met a fellow laborer on the way,
Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed;
But now the savage temper was reclaim'd,
Persuasion on his lips had taken place;
For all plead well who plead the cause of grace.
His iron heart with scripture he assail'd,
Woo'd him to hear a sermon, and prevail'd.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,
Swift as the lightning-glimpse the arrow flew.
He wept; he trembled; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he; but none he found.
He felt his sins, and wonder'd he should feel.
Grace made the wound, and grace alone should heal.
Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies!
He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.
That holy day was wash'd with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.
The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learn'd, by his alter'd speech, the change divine!
Laugh'd when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh when he would swear as fast as they.
"No," said the penitent, "such words shall share
This breath no more; devoted now to prayer.
O! if thou seest (thine eye the future sees)
That I shall yet again blaspheme like these;
Now strike me to the ground on which I kneel,
Ere yet this heart relapses into steel;
Now take me to that heaven I once defied,
Thy presence, thy embrace!"—He spoke, and died.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON, ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

THAT ocean you have late survey'd,
Those rocks I too have seen;
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,
You, tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
No longer such to you.

To me the waves, that ceaseless broke
Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to port no more.

Oct., 1780.

LOVE ABUSED.

WHAT is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;
And earth a second Eden shows
Where'er the healing water flows:
But ah, if from the dykes and drains
Of sensual nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side,
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead.
The stream polluted, dark, and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with overflowing tears:
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN.

Dear Anna—between friend and friend
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
To express the occurrence of the day;
Our health, the weather, and the news;
What walks we take, what books we choose;
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.
But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Derived from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart:
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the trifflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couch'd in prose they will not hear;
Who labor hard to allure and draw
The loiterers I never saw,
Should feel that itching and that tingling,
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When call'd to address myself to you.
Mysterious are His ways whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is the allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions:
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,
Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver End.*
Thus Martha, e'en against her will,
Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,†
Are come from distant Loire, to choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains
To guess and spell what it contains:
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof, that we, and our affairs,
Are part of a Jehovah's cares;
For God unfolds by slow degrees
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads, at length, before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate in vain.

* An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.
† Lady Austen's residence in France.

Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud descry,
Or guess with a prophetic power,
The future splendor of the flower?
Just so the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use;
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
A harbinger of endless good.
Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small:
But merely to remark, that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size
That seem'd to promise no such prize;
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation.)
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken;
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

Dec., 1781.

THE COLUBRIAD.

Close by the threshold of a door nail'd fast
Three kittens sat; each kitten look'd aghast.
I, passing swift and inattentive by,
At the three kittens cast a careless eye;
Not much concern'd to know what they did there;
Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
But presently a loud and furious hiss [this?"
Caused me to stop, and to exclaim, "What's
When lo! upon the threshold met my view,
With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,
A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.
Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,
Darting it full against a kitten's nose;
Who, having never seen, in field or house,
The like, sat still and silent as a mouse;
Only projecting, with attention due, [you?"
Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, "Who are
On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe:
With which well arm'd I hasten'd to the spot,
To find the viper, but I found him not.
And, turning up the leaves and shrubs around,
Found only that he was not to be found.
But still the kittens, sitting as before,
Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
"I hope," said I, "the villain I would kill
Has slipp'd between the door and the door-sill;

And if I make dispatch, and follow hard,
No doubt but I shall find him in the yard:"
For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
E'en there I found him, there the full-grown cat,
His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat;
As curious as the kittens erst had been
To learn what this phenomenon might mean.
Fill'd with heroic ardor at the sight,
And fearing every moment he would bite,
And rob our household of our only cat
That was of age to combat with a rat;
With outstretch'd hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.
1782.

SONG. ON PEACE.

Written in the summer of 1783, at the request of Lady Austen, who gave the sentiment.

AIR—"*My fond Shepherds of late.*"

No longer I follow a sound;
No longer a dream I pursue;
O happiness! not to be found,
Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendor and dress,
In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,
But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
The voice of true wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if peace be the scope,
And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks it in meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above.

SONG.

Also written at the request of Lady Austen.

AIR—"*The Lass of Pattie's Mill.*"

WHEN all within is peace,
How nature seems to smile!
Delights that never cease
The livelong day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve
With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings, to deceive
And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
Gives Nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
Enlivens all it sees;
Can make a wintry sky
Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
So beauteously array'd
In Nature's various robe,
With wondrous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
And longs to be at rest.

VERSES

SELECTED FROM AN OCCASIONAL POEM ENTITLED

"VALEDICTION."

OH Friendship! cordial of the human breast!
So little felt, so fervently profess'd!
Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years;
The promise of delicious fruit appears:
We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,
Such is the folly of our dreaming youth;
But soon, alas! detect the rash mistake
That sanguine inexperience loves to make;
And view with tears the expected harvest lost,
Decay'd by time, or wither'd by a frost.
Whoever undertakes a friend's great part
Should be renew'd in nature, pure in heart,
Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove
A thousand ways the force of genuine love.
He may be call'd to give up health and gain,
To exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,
To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,
And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.
The heart of man, for such a task too frail,
When most relied on is most sure to fail;
And, summon'd to partake its fellow's woe,
Starts from its office like a broken bow.
Votaries of business and of pleasure prove
Faithless alike in friendship and in love.
Retired from all the circles of the gay,
And all the crowds that bustle life away,
To scenes where competition, envy, strife,
Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,
Let me, the charge of some good angel, find
One who has known, and has escaped mankind;
Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away
The manners, not the morals, of the day:
With him, perhaps with her (for men have known
No firmer friendships than the fair have shown,)
Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,
All former friends forgiven and forgot,
Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,
Union of hearts without a flaw between.
'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,
If God give health, that sunshine of our days!
And if he add a blessing shared by few,
Content of heart, more praises still are due—
But if he grant a friend, that boon possess'd
Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest;
And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,
Born from above and made divinely wise,
He gives, what bankrupt nature never can,
Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,
Gold, purer far than Ophir ever knew,
A soul, an image of himself, and therefore true.
Nov., 1783.

EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON.

HERE Johnson lies—a sage by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud,
Whose prose was eloquence, by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim—grave, masculine, and strong—
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from heaven possess'd,
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
O man, immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth—by glory in the skies!
Jan., 1785.

TO MISS C——, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

How many between east and west
Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
The day that gave them birth!
Not so when Stella's natal morn
Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born,
And wish her born once more!

1786.

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

This cap, that so stately appears,
With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems by the crest that it rears
Ambitious of brushing the sky:
This cap to my cousin I owe,
She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreath'd into an elegant bow,
The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
Contrived both for toil and repose,
Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,
In which I both scribble and doze,
Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
And rival in lustre of that
In which, or astronomy lies,
Fair Cassiopeia sat:

These carpets so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride!
Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,
Escaped from a cross-country ride!
This table, and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin
And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope in due time to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too:

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a buffet,
But what the gods call it above
Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet:
These curtains that keep the room warm
Or cool, as the season demands,
Those stoves that for pattern and form
Seem the labor of Mulciber's hands:

All these are not half that I owe
To one, from our earliest youth,
To me ever ready to show
Benignity, friendship, and truth;
For time, the destroyer declared
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these;
And fancies I fear they will seem—
Poets' goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream
When I sing of the splendor of mine.

1786.

LINES COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ.,

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH, BY HIS NEPHEW WILLIAM OF WESTON.

Farewell! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (O blessings rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd;
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half supprest,
Love shall be satisfied, and veil the rest.

June, 1788.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON.

THE NIGHT OF THE SEVENTEENTH OF MARCH, 1789.

When, long sequester'd from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign,

Then loyalty, with all his lamps
New trimm'd, a gallant show!
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell, of streets or squares
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves, on high
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd,
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er design'd,

For no such sight had England's queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where George, recover'd, made a scene
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undeserved,
How much the object of her love
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design—
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before
To veil a deed of thine!

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
Resolved to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
That night except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld, aloft portray'd
On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health and heavenly aid,
And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,
So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine
The night his city fell.

Soon watery grew her eyes and dim,
But with a joyful tear,
None else, except in prayer for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like those in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirit cheer d,
And, through the cumbrous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And fearless of the billowy scene
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She view'd the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice,
Heaven grant us no such future sight,
Such previous woe the price!

THE COCK-FIGHTER'S GARLAND.*

Muse—hide his name of whom I sing,
Lest his surviving house thou bring
For his sake into scorn,
Nor speak the school from which he drew
The much or little that he knew,
Nor place where he was born.

That such a man once was, may seem
Worthy of record (if the theme
Perchance may credit win)
For proof to man, what man may prove,
If grace depart, and demons move
The source of guilt within.

This man (for since the howling wild
Disclaims him, man he must be styled)
Wanted no good below.
Gentle he was, if gentle birth
Could make him such, and he had worth,
If wealth can worth bestow.

In social talk and ready jest,
He shone superior at the feast,
And qualities of mind,
Illustrious in the eyes of those
Whose gay society he chose,
Possess'd of every kind.

Methinks I see him powder'd red,
With bushy locks his well-dress'd head
Wing'd broad on either side,
The mossy rosebud not so sweet;
His steeds superb, his carriage neat,
As luxury could provide.

Can such be cruel? Such can be
Cruel as hell, and so was he;
A tyrant entertain'd
With barbarous sports, whose fell delight
Was to encourage mortal fight
'Twixt birds to battle train'd.

One feather'd champion he possess'd,
His darling far beyond the rest,
Which never knew disgrace,
Nor e'er had fought but he made flow
The life-blood of his fiercest foe,
The Cæsar of his race.

It chanced at last, when on a day,
He push'd him to the desperate fray,
His courage droop'd, he fled.
The master storm'd, the prize was lost,
And, instant, frantic at the cost,
He doom'd his favorite dead.

He seized him fast, and from the pit
Flew to the kitchen, snatch'd the spit,
And, Bring me cord, he cried;
The cord was brought, and at his word,
To that dire implement the bird,
Alive and struggling, tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil;
And all the terrors of the tale
That can be shall be sunk—
Led by the sufferer's screams aright
His shock'd companions view the sight,
And him with fury drunk.

* Written on reading the following in the obituary of the Gentleman's Magazine for April, 1789.—"At Tottenham, John Ardesoif, Esq., a young man of large fortune, and in the splendor of his carriages and horses rivalled by few country gentlemen. His table was that of hospitality, where, it may be said, he sacrificed too much to conviviality; but, if he had his foibles he had his merits also, that far outweighed them. Mr. A. was very fond of cock-fighting, and had a favorite cock, upon which he had won many profitable matches. The last bet he laid upon this cock he lost; which so enraged him, that he had the bird tied to a spit and roasted alive before a large fire. The screams of the miserable animal were so affecting, that some gentlemen who were present attempted to interfere, which so enraged Mr. A., that he seized a poker, and with the most furious vehemence declared, that he would kill the first man who interposed; but, in the midst of his passionate asseverations, he fell down dead upon the spot. Such, we are assured, were the circumstances which attended the death of this great pillar of humanity."

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate
For the old warrior at the grate:
He, deaf to pity's call,
Whirl'd round him rapid as a wheel
His culinary club of steel
Death menacing on all.

But vengeance hung not far remote,
For while he stretch'd his clamorous throat,
And heaven and earth defied,
Big with a curse too closely pent,
That struggled vainly for a vent,
He totter'd, reel'd, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,
To point the judgment of the skies;
But judgments plain as this,
That, sent for man's instruction, bring
A written label on their wing,
'Tis hard to read amiss.

May, 1789.

TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

Hastings! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
While young, humane, conversable, and kind,
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,
Now grown a villain, and the worst of men.
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the best.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE, "AD LIBRUM SUUM."

Maria, could Horace have guess'd
What honor awaited his ode
To his own little volume address'd,
The honor which you have bestow'd;
Who have traced it in characters here,
So elegant, even, and neat,
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer, if you please, he had said,
A nymph shall hereafter arise,
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
The glory your malice denies;
Shall dignity give to my lay,
Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
Nothing ever was written so well.

Feb., 1790.

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT,

ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26 1784.

Where hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? when wast thou an egg new spawn'd,
Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia, just emerging, peeps
Above the brine—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulf,
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

INSCRIPTION FOR A STONE,

ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS AT CHILLINGTON, THE SEAT OF T. GIFFARD, ESQ., 1790.

Other stones the era tell
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.
Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm and frost—these oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay,
But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread its branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.
Cherish honor, virtue, truth,
So shalt thou prolong thy youth.
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fix'd and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

June, 1790.

ANOTHER,

FOR A STONE ERECTED ON A SIMILAR OCCASION AT THE SAME PLACE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

Reader! behold a monument
That asks no sigh or tear,
Though it perpetuate the event
Of a great burial here.

June, 1790. Anno 1791.

TO MRS. KING,

ON HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR, A PATCHWORK COUNTERPANE OF HER OWN MAKING.

The bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quicken'd by a call
Both on his heart and head,

To pay with tuneful thanks the care
And kindness of a lady fair,
Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
On Ida's barren top sublime,
(As Homer's epic shows)
Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
Without the aid of sun or showers,
For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that which in the scorching day,
Receives the weary swain,
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
Till roused to toil again.

What labors of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groan'd for me!
Should every maiden come
To scramble for the patch that bears
The impress of the robe she wears,
The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of every hue
All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers
Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers—
Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks then to every gentle fair
Who will not come to peck me bare
As bird of borrow'd feather,
And thanks to one above them all,
The gentle fair of Pertenhall,
Who put the whole together.

August, 1790.

IN MEMORY OF

THE LATE JOHN THORNTON, ESQ.

Poets attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the author of all good in man,
And, next, commemorating worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.
Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
Famed for thy probity from shore to shore,
Thee, Thornton! worthy in some page to shine,
As honest and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.
Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous when they die.
What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing woe
By virtue suffer'd combating below? [means
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;
Avarice in thee was the desire of wealth
By rust unperishable or by stealth,
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven
Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
And, though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution boundless of thy own,
And still by motives of religious force
Impell'd thee more to that heroic course,
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat;
And, though in act unwearied, secret still,
As in some solitude the summer rill
Refreshes where it winds, the faded green, [seen.
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, un-
Such was thy charity: no sudden start,
After long sleep of passion in the heart,
But stedfast principle, and, in its kind,
Of close relation to the Eternal Mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To him whose works bespeak his nature, love.
Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee.

Nov., 1790.

THE FOUR AGES.

(A BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED POEM.)

"I could be well content, allowed the use
Of past experience, and the wisdom glean'd
From worn-out follies, now acknowledged such,
To recommence life's trial, in the hope
Of fewer errors, on a second proof!"
Thus, while grey evening lull'd the wind, and call'd
Fresh odors from the shrubbery at my side,
Taking my lonely winding walk, I mused,
And held accustom'd conference with my heart;
When from within it thus a voice replied:
"Couldst thou in truth? and art thou taught at length
This wisdom, and but this, from all the past?
Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,
Time wasted, violated laws, abuse
Of talents, judgment, mercies, better far
Than opportunity vouchsafed to err
With less excuse, and, haply, worse effect?"
I heard, and acquiesced: then to and fro
Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,
My gravelly bounds, from self to human kind
I pass'd, and next consider'd—what is man.
Knows he his origin? can he ascend
By reminiscence to his earliest date?
Slept he in Adam! And in those from him
Through numerous generations, till he found
At length his destined moment to be born?
Or was he not, till fashion'd in the womb?
Deep mysteries both! which schoolmen must have toil'd
To unriddle, and have left them mysteries still.
It is an evil incident to man,
And of the worst, that unexplored he leaves
Truths useful and attainable with ease,
To search forbidden deeps, where mystery lies
Not to be solved, and useless if it might.
Mysteries are food for angels; they digest
With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,
While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean
His manna from the ground, or starve and die.

May, 1791.

THE RETIRED CAT.*

A POET'S CAT, sedate and grave,
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick—
  Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould philosophique,
  Or else she learn'd it of her master.
Sometimes ascending, debonair,
An apple tree, or lofty pear,
Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watch'd the gardener at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering pot:
There, wanting nothing save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan
Apparell'd in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.
  But love of change, it seems, has place
Not only in our wiser race;
Cats also feel, as well as we,
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing, she began to find,
Exposed her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within:
She therefore wish'd instead of those
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair,
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.
  A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India, for the ladies' use,
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough, and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there;
Puss with delight beyond expression,
Survey'd the scene and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease, ere long,
And lull'd by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
  And slept as she would sleep her last.
When in came, housewifely inclined,
  The chambermaid, and shut it fast:
By no malignity impell'd,
But all unconscious whom it held.
  Awaken'd by the shock (cried Puss)
"Was ever cat attended thus?
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me,
For soon as I was well composed.
Then came the maid, and it was closed.

How smooth these 'kerchiefs, and how sweet!
O what a delicate retreat!
I will resign myself to rest
Till Sol, declining in the west,
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come and let me out."
  The evening came, the sun descended,
And Puss remain'd still unattended.
The night roll'd tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day,)
The sprightly morn her course renew'd,
The evening grey again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entomb'd the day before.
With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a wink or purr'd,
Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.
  That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—"What's that?"
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied.
Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd
Something imprison'd in the chest,
And doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there.
At length a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him and dispell'd his fears:
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top.
For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.
Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete
As erst, with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond apprehension
A theme for all the world's attention,
But modest, sober, cured of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest
Anything rather than a chest.
Then stepp'd the poet into bed
With this reflection in his head:

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence:
The man who dreams himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around, in all that's done,
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation.

1791.

* Cowper's partiality to animals is well known. Lady Hesketh, in one of her letters, states, "that he had, at one time, five rabbits, three hares, two guinea-pigs, a magpie, a jay, and a starling; besides two goldfinches, two canary birds, and two dogs. It is amazing how the three hares can find room to gambol and frolic (as they certainly do) in his small parlor;" and she adds, "I forgot to enumerate a squirrel, which he had at the same time, and which used to play with one of the hares continually. One evening, the cat giving one of the hares a sound box on the ear, the hare ran after her, and, having caught her, punished her by drumming on her back with her two feet as hard as drum-sticks, till the creature would have actually been killed, had not Mrs. Unwin rescued her."

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
  Of numerous charms possess'd,
A warm dispute once chanced to wage,
  Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete
  Had both alike been mild:

But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frown'd oftener than she smiled.

And in her humor, when she frown'd,
Would raise her voice and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
The nymphs referr'd the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judg'd it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind and soft,
The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
Or so resolved to err—
In short, the charms her sister had
They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the god, whom fondly they
Their great inspirer call,
Was heard, one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all.

"Since thus ye have combined," he said,
"My favorite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid,
With June's undoubted right,

"The minx shall for your folly's sake,
Still prove herself a shrew,
Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
And pinch your noses blue."

May, 1791.

YARDLEY OAK.*

Survivor sole, and hardly such, of all
That once lived here, thy brethren, at my birth,
(Since which I number threescore winters past)
A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd perhaps,
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
Relics of ages! could a mind, imbued
With truth from heaven, created things adore,
I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee.
It seems idolatry with some excuse,
When our forefather Druids in their oaks
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
Unpurified by an authentic act
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.
Thou wast a bauble once, a cup and ball [jay
Which babes might play with; and the thievish
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.

* This tree had been known by the name of *Judith* for many ages. Perhaps it received that name on being planted by the Countess Judith, niece to the Conqueror, whom he gave in marriage to the English Earl Waltheof, with the counties of Northampton and Huntingdon as her dower.—*Vide* Letters, p. 301.

But fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.
So fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
Of argument, employ'd too oft amiss,
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!
Thou fell'st mature; and, in the loamy clod
Swelling with vegetative force instinct,
Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled twins,
Now stars; two lobes, protruding, pair'd exact;
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
And, all the elements thy puny growth
Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.
Who lived when thou wast such. Oh, could'st thou speak,
As in Dodona once thy kindred trees
Oracular, I would not curious ask
The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.
By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
The clock of history, facts and events
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
Recovering, and misstated setting right—
Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!
Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flocks
That grazed it stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe shelter'd from the storm.
No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth. [push'd
While thus through all the stages thou hast
Of treeship—first, a seedling, hid in grass;
Then twig; then sapling; and, as century roll'd
Slow after century, a giant bulk
Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root,
Upheaved above the soil, and sides emboss'd
With prominent wens globose—till at the last
The rottenness, which time is charged to inflict
On other mighty ones, found also thee.
What exhibitions various hath the world
Witness'd of mutability in all
That we account most durable below?
Change is the diet on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last,
Destroys them. Skies uncertain now the heat
Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds—
Calm and alternate storm moisture, and drought,
Invigorate by turns the springs of life
In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,
Fine passing thought, e'en in their coarsest works,
Delight in agitation, yet sustain
The force that agitates not unimpair'd;
But worn by frequent impulse to the cause
Of their best tone their dissolution owe.
Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
From almost nullity into a state
Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
Slow, into such magnificent decay.
Time was when, settling on thy leaf, a fly

Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents [deck
That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the
Of some flagg'd admiral; and tortuous arms,
The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,
Warp'd into tough knee-timber, many a load!*
But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days
Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
The bottomless demands of contest waged
For senatorial honors. Thus to time
The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
Achieved a labor which had, far and wide,
By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.
Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seems
A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,
Which it would give in rivulets to thy root.
Thou temptest none, but rather much forbidd'st
The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
A quarry of stout spurs and knotted fangs,
Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp
The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.
So stands a kingdom whose foundation yet
Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
Though all the superstructure by the tooth
Pulverized of venality, a shell
Stands now, and semblance only of itself!
Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
With bow and shaft have burnt them. Some have left
A splinter'd stump bleach'd to a snowy white;
And some memorial none where once they grew.
Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof not contemptible of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force
Than yonder upstarts of the neighboring wood.
So much thy juniors, who their birth received
Half a millennium since the date of thine.
But since, although well qualified by age
To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
May be expected from thee, seated here
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform
Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.
One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him; learn'd not by degrees,
Nor owed articulation to his ear;
But moulded by his Maker into man
At once, upstood intelligent, survey'd
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties assign'd
To each his name significant, and fill'd
With love and wisdom, render'd back to Heaven
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excused the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charged his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Lean'd on her elbow, watching time, whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme....

1791.

* Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE,

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Whence is it that, amazed, I hear
From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favor shown,
Am I selected from the crowd
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou, rather, under force
Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
Of happier days at hand!

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyous year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing
To make e'en January charm,
And every season spring.

1792.

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM

OF MISS PATTY MORE'S, SISTER OF HANNAH MORE.

In vain to live from age to age
While modern bards endeavor,
I write my name in Patty's page,
And gain my point forever.

W. COWPER.

March 6, 1792.

SONNET

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee by cruel men and impious call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labor such as thine be vain.
Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause:
Hope smiles, joy springs, and though cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near
That shall remunerate thy toils severe,
By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth and all the blest above.

April 16, 1792.

EPIGRAM

PRINTED IN THE NORTHAMPTON MERCURY.

To purify their wine, some people bleed
A lamb into the barrel, and succeed;
No nostrum, planters say, is half so good
To make fine sugar as a negro's blood.
Now lambs and negroes both are harmless things,
And thence perhaps this wondrous virtue springs,
'Tis in the blood of innocence alone—
Good cause why planters never try their own.

TO DR. AUSTIN,

OF CECIL STREET, LONDON.

Austin! accept a grateful verse from me,
The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
Loved by the muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in my verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,
Immortalizing names which else had died:
And O! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health!
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompense his arts with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.
Friend of my friend!* I love thee, though unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

May 26, 1792.

CATHARINA:

THE SECOND PART: ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE COURTENAY, ESQ.

Believe it or not, as you choose,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.
I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And lo—she is actually come!

Such prophecy some may despise,
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approved in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.
'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth
From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth
Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria† would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all,
But less to our grief, could we view
Catharina the Queen of the Hall.
And therefore I wish'd as I did,
And therefore this union of hands:
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry—Amen—to the bans

Since, therefore, I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain
When making good wishes for her,
I will e'en to my wishes again—
With one I have made her a wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life—
How soon I can make her a mother.

June, 1792.

* Hayley. † Lady Throckmorton.

EPITAPH ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

Though once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honor claim.
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase—
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
"Yes,"—the indignant shade of Fop replies—
"And worn with vain pursuit, man also dies."

August, 1792.

SONNET TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.,

ON HIS PICTURE OF ME IN CRAYONS,

Drawn at Eartham in the 61st year of my age, and in the months of August and September, 1792.

Romney, expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvas, not the form alone
And semblance, but however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face—
With strokes that time ought never to erase,
Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.

But this I mark—that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear.
Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;

For in my looks what sorrow could'st thou see
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

October, 1792.

MARY AND JOHN.

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
Should John wed a score, oh, the claws and the scratches!
It can't be a match—'tis a bundle of matches.

EPITAPH ON MR. CHESTER.

OF CHICHELEY.

Tears flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,
Till all who knew him follow to the skies.
Tears therefore fall where Chester's ashes sleep;
Him wife, friends, brothers, children, servants weep—
And justly—few shall ever him transcend
As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

April, 1793.

TO MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM,

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE MADE BY HERSELF.

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee,
A kitten both in size and glee,
I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love;—that gem's too dear
For richest rogues to win it;
I, therefore, as a proof of love,
Esteem thy present far above
The best things kept within it.

May 4, 1793.

INSCRIPTION FOR A HERMITAGE IN THE AUTHOR'S GARDEN.

This cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
Built as it has been in our waning years,
A rest afforded to our weary feet,
Preliminary to—the last retreat.

May, 1793.

TO MRS. UNWIN.

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feign'd they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things,
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honor due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;

There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

May, 1793.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER.

Kinsman beloved, and as a son, by me!
When I behold the fruit of thy regard,
The sculptured form of my old favorite bard,
I reverence feel for him, and love for thee:
Joy too and grief—much joy that there should be,
Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward
With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
Which others scorn; critics by courtesy.
The grief is this, that, sunk in Homer's mine,
I lose my precious years, now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross when balanced in the Christian scale.
Be wiser thou—like our forefather Donne,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

May, 1793.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE.

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the church, endow'd
With heavenly gifts to heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favors from on high,
Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry:
Heaven grant us half the omen—may we see
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

May, 1793.

ON A SPANIEL, CALLED BEAU, KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.

A spaniel, Beau, that fares like you,
Well fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
Each trifle that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,
Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat
And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chased with furious heat,
You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
Since teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
So much resemble man?

July 15, 1793.

BEAU'S REPLY.

Sir, when I flew to seize the bird
In spite of your command,
A louder voice than yours I heard,
And harder to withstand.

You cried—Forbear!—but in my breast
A mightier cried—Proceed!—
'Twas nature, Sir, whose strong behest
Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet, much as nature I respect,
I ventured once to break
(As you perhaps may recollect)
Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,
Passing his prison door,
Had flutter'd all his strength away,
And panting press'd the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
Not destined to my tooth,
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,
And lick'd the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse
My disobedience now,

Nor some reproof yourself refuse
From your aggrieved bow-wow:

If killing birds be such a crime,
(Which I can hardly see,)
What think you, Sir, of killing time
With verse address'd to me!

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Dear architect of fine chateaux in air,
Worthier to stand forever, if they could,
Than any built of stone or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear!

O for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware!

But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth
To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd birth!
But what his commentator's happiest praise?

That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

June 29, 1793.

ANSWER

To Stanzas addressed to Lady Hesketh, by Miss Catharine Fanshawe, in returning a Poem of Mr. Cowper's, lent to her, on condition she should neither show it, nor take a copy.

To be remember'd thus is fame,
And in the first degree;
And did the few like her the same,
The press might sleep for me.

So Homer in the memory stored
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,
But never lodged so well.

1793.

ON FLAXMAN'S PENELOPE.

The suitors sinn'd, but with a fair excuse,
Whom all this elegance might well seduce;
Nor can our censure on the husband fall,
Who for a wife so lovely, slew them all.

September, 1793.

TO THE SPANISH ADMIRAL COUNT GRAVINA,

On his translating the Author's Song on a Rose into Italian Verse.

My rose, Gravina, blooms anew,
And steep'd not now in rain,
But in Castilian streams by you,
Will never fade again

1793.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.

Pause here, and think: a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein;
Seems it to say—"Health here has long to reign?"
Hast thou the vigor of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? a heart untaught to sigh?
Yet fear. Youth, oftimes healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees;
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims "Prepare thee for an early shroud."

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And when his juicy salads fail'd
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humor's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath this walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,
Qui totum novennium vixit,
Puss.
Siste paulisper,
Qui præteriturus es,
Et tecum sic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus,
Nec plumbum missile,
Nec laqueus,
Nec imbres nimii,
Confecêre:
Tamen mortuus est—
Et moriar ego.

THE following account of the treatment of his hares was inserted by Cowper in the Gentleman's Magazine.

IN the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of anything that would engage my attention, without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbor of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbors that I was pleased with the present, and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in; each had a separate apartment, so contrived that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick,) and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favorite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be perfectly tamed; the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was however very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth, and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humor and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all: and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlor after supper, when, the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening, the cat being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them no two could be found exactly similar: a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem too to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favorites: to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportman's amusement in abhorrence; he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion, that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at least grass is not their staple; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sowthistle, dandelion, and lettuce, are their favorite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident that fine white sand is in great estimation with them; I suppose as a digestive. It happened, that I was cleaning a birdcage when the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which, being at once directed to it by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously; since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat: straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties: they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night: during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding

to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These however not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water; but so placed, that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit, that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he has grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them, that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784.

MEMORANDUM FOUND AMONG MR. COWPER'S PAPERS.

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

A TALE.*

In Scotland's realms, where trees are few,
Nor even shrubs abound;
But where, however bleak the view,
Some better things are found;

For husband there and wife may boast
Their union undefiled,
And false ones are as rare almost
As hedgerows in the wild—

In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare
The history chanced of late—
The history of a wedded pair,
A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
With genial instinct fill'd;
They pair'd, and would have built a nest,
But found not where to build.

The heaths uncover'd and the moors
Except with snow and sleet,
Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores
Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding-place they sought,
Till both grew vex'd and tired;
At length a ship arriving brought
The good so long desired.

A ship!—could such a restless thing
Afford them place of rest?
Or was the merchant charged to bring
The homeless birds a nest?

Hush! silent hearers profit most—
This racer of the sea
Proved kinder to them than the coast,
It served them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,
The tree they call a mast,
And had a hollow with a wheel,
Through which the tackle pass'd.

Within that cavity aloft
Their roofless home they fix'd,
Form'd with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mix'd.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor
With russet specks bedight—
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,
As she had changed her kind;
But goes the male? Far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind.

No—soon as from ashore he saw
The winged mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love;

Then, perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along,
The billows and the blast defied,
And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight
His feather'd shipmates eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight
Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And from a chance so new
Each some approaching good divines,
And may his hopes be true!

Hail, honor'd land! a desert where
Not even birds can hide,
Yet parents of this loving pair
Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine
In company with man;

For whose lean country much disdain
We English often show,
Yet from a richer nothing gain
But wantonness and woe—

Be it your fortune, year by year
The same resource to prove,
And may ye, sometimes landing here,
Instruct us how to love!

June, 1793.

* This tale is founded on an article which appeared in the Buckinghamshire Herald, Saturday, June 1, 1793: —"Glasgow, May 23. In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom, while the hen never leaves it, but when she descends to the hull for food."

TO MARY.

THE twentieth year is well nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah! would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more;
My Mary!

For, though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream:
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently press'd, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two; yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though press'd with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still.
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

Autumn of 1793.

THE CASTAWAY.

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succor yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow:
But he, they knew, nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repell'd:
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear;
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

March 20, 1799.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear President, whose art sublime
Gives perpetuity to time,
And bids transactions of a day,
That fleeting hours would waft away
To dark futurity, survive,
And in unfading beauty live,—
You cannot with a grace decline
A special mandate of the Nine—
Yourself, whatever task you choose,
So much indebted to the Muse.
Thus say the sisterhood:—We come—
Fix well your pallet on your thumb,
Prepare the pencil and the tints—
We come to furnish you with hints.
French disappointment, British glory,
Must be the subject of the story.
First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
Then slope it to a point below;
Your outline easy, airy, light,
Fill'd up, becomes a paper kite.
Let independence, sanguine, horrid,
Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:
Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
Draw six-and-twenty rueful faces,
Each with a staring, stedfast eye,
Fix'd on his great and good ally.
France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—
Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,
Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
Takes charge of every fluttering sheet,
And lays them all at George's feet.
Iberia, trembling from afar,
Renounces the confederate war.
Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
France calls her shatter'd navies home.
Repenting Holland learns to mourn
The sacred treaties she has torn;
Astonishment and awe profound
Are stamp'd upon the nations round:
Without one friend, above all foes,
Britannia gives the world repose.

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELERS;

or, LABOR IN VAIN.

A New Song, to a Tune never sung before.

I sing of a journey to Clifton.*
We would have perform'd, if we could;
Without cart or barrow, to lift on
Poor Mary† and me through the mud.
Slee, sla, slud,
Stuck in the mud;
Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood!

So away we went, slipping and sliding;
Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux frogs*,
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.
Wheels, no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter, and rattle, and make such a rout.

* A village near Olney.
† Mrs. Unwin.

DIALOGUE.

SHE.

"Well! now, I protest it is charming;
How finely the weather improves!
That cloud, though 'tis rather alarming,
How slowly and stately it moves."

HE.

"Pshaw! never mind,
'Tis not in the wind,
We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind.

SHE.

"I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded, and penn'd,
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half a mile to an end."

HE.

"The longer we stay,
The longer we may;
It's a folly to think about weather or way."

SHE.

"But now I begin to be frighted,
If I fall what a way I should roll!
I am glad that the bridge was indicted,
Stay! stop! I am sunk in a hole!"

HE.

"Nay, never care.
'Tis a common affair;
You'll not be the last, that will set a foot there."

SHE.

"Let me breathe now a little and ponder
On what it were better to do;
That terrible lane I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through."

HE.

"So think I:—
But, by the bye,
We never shall know, if we never should try."

SHE.

"But should we get there, how shall we get home?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past!
Slipping, and sliding, and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruined at last!
Oh this lane!
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labor in vain."

HE.

"Stick fast there while I go and look;"

SHE.

"Don't go away, for fear I should fall:"

HE.

"I have examined it, every nook,
And what you see here is a sample of all.
Come, wheel round,
The dirt we have found
Would be an estate, at a farthing a pound."

Now, sister Anne,* the guitar you must take,
Set it, and sing it, and make it a song:
I have varied the verse, for variety's sake,
And cut it off short—because it was long.
'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.

* The late Lady Austen.

ON THE AUTHOR OF LETTERS ON LITERATURE.*

The Genius of the Augustan age
His head among Rome's ruins rear'd,
And, bursting with heroic rage,
When literary Heron appear'd;

Thou hast, he cried, like him of old
Who set the Ephesian dome on fire,
By being scandalously bold,
Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

And for traducing Virgil's name
Shalt share his merited reward;
A perpetuity of fame,
That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd.

STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS OF MILTON.† ANNO 1790.

"Me too, perchance, in future days,
The sculptured stone shall show,
With Paphian myrtle or with bays
Parnassian on my brow.

"But I, or ere that season come,
Escaped from every care,
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
And sleep securely there."‡

So sang in Roman tone and style,
The youthful bard, ere long
Ordain'd to grace his native isle
With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,
Hearing the deed unblest
Of wretches who have dared profane
His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones§
Where Milton's ashes lay,
That trembled not to grasp his bones
And steal his dust away!

O ill requited bard! neglect
Thy living worth repaid,
And blind idolatrous respect
As much affronts thee dead.

August, 1790.

* Nominally by Robert Heron, Esq., but supposed to have been written by John Pinkerton. 8vo. 1785.

† The bones of Milton, who lies buried in Cripplegate church, were disinterred; a pamphlet by Le Neve was published at the time, giving an account of what appeared on opening his coffin.

‡ Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas—At ego secura pace quiescam.
Milton in Manso.

§ Cowper, no doubt, had in his memory the lines said to have been written by Shakspeare on his tomb:

"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust inclosed here.
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

June 22, 1782.

My dear friend,

If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much, or more, to write;
But what we would, so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time
I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme
To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning (for I must confess,
It were but folly to suppress)
His pleasure, or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.
But though the sun is flaming high
In the centre of yon arch, the sky,
And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free,
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him undeserved praise,
And he by no uncommon lot
Was famed for virtues he had not;
Or whether, which is like enough,
His Highness may have taken huff,
So seldom sought with invocation,
Since it has been the reigning fashion
To disregard his inspiration,
I seem no brighter in my wits,
For all the radiance he emits,
Than if I saw, through midnight vapor,
The glimmering of a farthing taper.
Oh for a succedaneum, then,
To accelerate a creeping pen!
Oh for a ready succedaneum,
Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso,
Et morbo jam caliginoso!
'Tis here; this oval box well fill'd
With best tobacco, finely mill'd,
Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumber'd senses
Oh Nymph of transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide,
Or listening with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed
Which, whether pulverized it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or whether, touch'd with fire, it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine—
Forgive the bard, if bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free,
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;
So may no blight infest thy plains,
And no unseasonable rains;
And so may smiling peace once more
Visit America's sad shore;
And thou, secure from all alarms,
Of thundering drums and glittering arms,
Rove unconfined beneath the shade
Thy wide expanded leaves have made;
So may thy votaries increase,
And fumigation never cease.

May Newton with renew'd delights
Perform thine odoriferous rites,
While clouds of incense half divine
Involve thy disappearing shrine;
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
Be always filling, never full.

EPITAPH ON MRS. M. HIGGINS,

OF WESTON.

Laurels may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
But happiest they who win the world to come:
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.
They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

1791.

SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

Deem not, sweet rose, that bloom'st 'midst many a thorn,
Thy friend, tho' to a cloister's shade consign'd,
Can e'er forget the charms he left behind,
Or pass unheeded this auspicious morn!
In happier days to brighter prospects born,
O tell thy thoughtless sex, the virtuous mind,
Like thee, content in every state may find,
And look on Folly's pageantry with scorn.
To steer with nicest art betwixt th' extreme
Of idle mirth, and affectation coy;
To blend good sense with elegance and ease;
To bid Affliction's eye no longer stream;
Is thine; best gift, the unfailing source of joy,
The guide to pleasures which can never cease!

ON A MISTAKE IN HIS TRANSLATION OF HOMER.

Cowper had sinn'd with some excuse,
If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
Of changing ewes for wethers;*

But, male for female is a trope,
Or rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope,
When he translated Homer.

ON THE BENEFIT RECEIVED BY HIS MAJESTY, FROM SEA-BATHING IN THE YEAR 1789.

O sovereign of an isle renown'd
For undisputed sway,
Wherever o'er yon gulf profound
Her navies wing their way.

With juster claims she builds at length
Her empire on the sea,
And well may boast the waves her strength,
Which strength restored to thee.

ADDRESSED TO MISS —— ON READING THE PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE.*

And dwells there in a female heart,
By bounteous Heaven design'd,
The choicest raptures to impart,
To feel the most refined—

Dwells there a wish in such a breast
Its nature to forego,
To smother in ignoble rest
At once both bliss and woe!

Far be the thought, and far the strain,
Which breathes the low desire,
How sweet so'er the verse complain,
Though Phœbus string the lyre.

Come, then, fair maid, (in nature wise,)
Who, knowing them, can tell
From generous sympathy what joys
The glowing bosom swell:

In justice to the various powers
Of pleasing, which you share,
Join me, amid your silent hours,
To form the better prayer.

With lenient balm my Oberon hence
To fairy land be driven,
With every herb that blunts the sense
Mankind received from heaven.

Oh! if my sovereign Author please,
Far be it from my fate
To live unbless'd in torpid ease,
And slumber on in state;

"Each tender tie of life defied,
Whence social pleasures spring,
Unmoved with all the world beside,
A solitary thing—"

Some Alpine mountain, wrapt in snow,
Thus braves the whirling blast,
Eternal winter doom'd to know,
No genial spring to taste.

In vain warm suns their influence shed,
The zephyrs sport in vain,
He rears unchanged his barren head,
Whilst beauty decks the plain.

What though in scaly armor dress'd,
Indifference may repel
The shafts of wo—in such a breast
No joy can ever dwell.

'Tis woven in the world's great plan,
And fix'd by heaven's decree,

* I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirized myself in two stanzas, which I composed last night, while I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dosed with laudanum. If you find them not very brilliant, therefore, you will know how to account for it.—*Letter to Joseph Hill, Esq.*, dated April 15, 1792.

* For Mrs. Greville's Ode, see *Annual Register*, vol. v. p. 202.

That all the true delights of man
Should spring from sympathy.

'Tis nature bids, and whilst the laws
Of nature we retain,
Our self-approving bosom draws
A pleasure from its pain.

Thus grief itself has comforts dear
The sordid never know;
And ecstacy attends the tear
When virtue bids it flow.

For, when it streams from that pure source,
No bribes the heart can win
To check, or alter from its course,
The luxury within.

Peace to the phlegm of sullen elves,
Who, if from labor eased,
Extend no care beyond themselves.
Unpleasing and unpleased.

Let no low thought suggest the prayer,
Oh! grant, kind Heaven, to me,
Long as I draw ethereal air,
Sweet Sensibility!

Where'er the heavenly nymph is seen,
With lustre-beaming eye,
A train, attendant on their queen,
(Her rosy chorus) fly;

The jocund loves in Hymen's band,
With torches ever bright,
And generous friendship, hand in hand
With pity's wat'ry sight.

The gentler virtues too are join'd
In youth immortal warm;
The soft relations, which, combined,
Give life her every charm.

The arts come smiling in the close,
And lend celestial fire;
The marble breathes, the canvas glows,
The muses sweep the lyre.

"Still may my melting bosom cleave
To sufferings not my own,
And still the sigh responsive heave
Where'er is heard a groan.

"So pity shall take virtue's part,
Her natural ally,
And fashioning my soften'd heart,
Prepare it for the sky."

This artless vow may Heaven receive,
And you, fond maid, approve:
So may your guiding angel give
Whate'er you wish or love!

So may the rosy-finger'd hours
Lead on the various year,
And every joy, which now is yours,
Extend a larger sphere!

And suns to come, as round they wheel,
Your golden moments bless
With all a tender heart can feel,
Or lively fancy guess!

1762.

FROM

A LETTER TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

LATE RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,

Says the pipe to the snuff-box, I can't understand
What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,
That you are in fashion all over the land,
And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

Do but see what a pretty contemplative air
I give to the company—pray do but note 'em—
You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,
Or at least would suppose them the wise men [of Gotham.

My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,
While you are a nuisance where'er you appear;
There is nothing but snivelling and blowing of noses,
Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to [hear.

Then, lifting his lid in a delicate way, [gaging,
And opening his mouth with a smile quite en-
The box in reply was heard plainly to say,
What a silly dispute is this we are waging!

If you have a little of merit to claim, [weed,
You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian
And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,
The before-mentioned drug in apology plead.

Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own
No room for a sneer, much less a cachinnus,
We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone, [in us.
But of anything else they may chouse to put

THE FLATTING MILL.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

When a bar of pure silver or ingot of gold
Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,
It is pass'd between cylinders often, and roll'd
In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears
Like a loose heap of ribbon, of glittering show,
Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,
And, warm'd by the pressure, is all in a glow.

This process achiev'd, it is doom'd to sustain
The thump after thump of a gold-beater's mallet,
And at last is of service in sickness or pain
To cover a pill for a delicate palate.

Alas for the poet! who dares undertake
To urge reformation of national ill—
His head and his heart are both likely to ache
With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight.
Smooth, ductile, and even his fancy must flow,
Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,
And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all he must beat it as thin and as fine
As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows;
For truth is unwelcome, however divine,
And unless you adorn it a nausea follows.

EPITAPH ON A FREE BUT TAME REDBREAST,

A FAVORITE OF MISS SALLY HURDIS.

These are not dewdrops, these are tears,
And tears by Sally shed
For absent Robin, who she fears,
With too much cause, is dead.

One morn he came not to her hand
As he was wont to come,
And, on her finger perch'd, to stand
Picking his breakfast-crumb.

Alarm'd, she call'd him, and perplex'd
She sought him, but in vain—
That day he came not, nor the next,
Nor ever came again.

She therefore raised him here a tomb,
Though where he fell, or how,
None knows, so secret was his doom,
Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died
In social Robin's stead,
Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,
Or haply never shed.

But Bob was neither rudely bold
Nor spiritlessly tame;
Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold,
But always in a flame.

March, 1792.

SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Hayley—thy tenderness fraternal shown
In our first interview, delightful guest!
To Mary, and me for her dear sake distress'd,
Such as it is, has made my heart thy own,
Though heedless now of new engagements grown;
For threescore winters make a wintry breast,
And I had purposed ne'er to go in quest
Of friendship more, except with God alone.
But thou hast won me; nor is God my foe,
Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,
Sent thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,
My brother, by whose sympathy I know
Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,
Not more to admire the bard than love the man.

June 2, 1792.

AN EPITAPH.

Here lies one who never drew
Blood himself, yet many slew;
Gave the gun its aim, and figure
Made in field, yet ne'er pull'd trigger.
Armed men have gladly made
Him their guide, and him obey'd;
At his signified desire
Would advance, present, and fire—
Stout he was, and large of limb,
Scores have fled at sight of him!
And to all this fame he rose
Only following his nose.
Neptune was he call'd, not he
Who controls the boisterous sea,
But of happier command,
Neptune of the furrow'd land;
And, your wonder vain to shorten,
Pointer to Sir John Throckmorton.

1792.

ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

In language warm as could be breathed or penn'd
Thy picture speaks the original, my friend,
Not by those looks that indicate thy mind—
They only speak thee friend of all mankind;
Expression here more soothing still I see,
That friend of all a partial friend to me.

January, 1793.

ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S BOWER.

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT.

Thrive, gentle plant! and weave a bower
For Mary and for me,
And deck with many a splendid flower,
Thy foliage large and free.

Thou camest from Eartham, and wilt shade
(If truly I divine)
Some future day the illustrious head
Of him who made thee mine.

Should Daphne show a jealous frown
And envy seize the bay,
Affirming none so fit to crown
Such honor'd brows as they,

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,
And with convincing power;
For why should not the virgin's friend
Be crown'd with virgin's bower?

Spring of 1793.

ON RECEIVING HEYNE'S VIRGIL

FROM MR. HAYLEY.

I should have deem'd it once an effort vain
To sweeten more sweet Maro's matchless strain,
But from that error now behold me free,
Since I received him as a gift from thee.

STANZAS.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH, BY A LADY,

In returning a Poem of Mr. Cowper's, lent to the Writer, on condition she should neither show it nor take a copy.

What wonder! if my wavering hand
Had dared to disobey,
When Hesketh gave a harsh command,
And Cowper led astray.

Then take this tempting gift of thine,
By pen uncopied yet!
But canst thou Memory confine,
Or teach me to forget?

More lasting than the touch of art,
Her characters remain;
When written by a feeling heart
On tablets of the brain.

COWPER'S REPLY.

To be remember'd thus is fame,
And in the first degree;
And did the few, like her the same,
The press might rest for me.

So Homer, in the mem'ry stor'd
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,
But never lodged so well.

LINES ADDRESSED TO MISS THEODORA JANE COWPER.

William was once a bashful youth,
His modesty was such,
That one might say, to say the truth,
He rather had too much.

Some said that it was want of sense,
And others, want of spirit,
(So blest a thing is impudence,)
While others could not bear it.

But some a different notion had,
And at each other winking,
Observed, that though he little said,
He paid it off with thinking.

Howe'er, it happen'd, by degrees,
He mended, and grew better,
In company grew more at ease,
And dress'd a little smarter;

Nay, now and then, could look quite gay,
As other people do;
And sometimes said, or tried to say,
A witty thing or so.

He eyed the women, and made free
To comment on their shapes,
So that there was, or seem'd to be,
No fear of a relapse.

The women said, who thought him rough,
But now no longer foolish,
"The creature might do well enough,
But wants a deal of polish."

At length improved from head to heel,
'Twas scarce too much to say,
No dancing beau was so genteel,
Or half so *dégagé*.

Now that a miracle so strange
May not in vain be shown,
Let the dear maid who wrought the change
E'en claim him for her own!

TO THE SAME.

How quick the change from joy to wo,
How chequer'd is our lot below!
Seldom we view the prospect fair;
Dark clouds of sorrow pain and care,
(Some pleasing intervals between,)
Scowl over more than half the scene.
Last week with Delia gentle maid!
Far hence in happier fields I stray'd.
Five suns successive rose and set,
And saw no monarch in his state,
Wrapt in the blaze of majesty,
So free from every care as I.
Next day the scene was overcast—
Such day till then I never pass'd,—
For on that day, relentless fate!
Delia and I must separate.
Yet ere we look'd our last farewell,
From her dear lips this comfort fell,—
"Fear not that time, where'er we rove,
Or absence, shall abate my love."

LINES ON A SLEEPING INFANT.

Sweet babe! whose image here express'd
Does thy peaceful slumbers show;
Guilt or fear, to break thy rest,
Never did thy spirit know.

Soothing slumbers! soft repose,
Such as mock the painter's skill,
Such as innocence bestows,
Harmless infant! lull thee still.

LINES.

Oh! to some distant scene, a willing exile
From the wild roar of this busy world,
Were it my fate with Delia to retire,
With her to wander through the sylvan shade,
Each morn or o'er the moss-embrowned turf,
Where, blest as the prime parents of mankind
In their own Eden, we would envy none,
But, greatly pitying whom the world calls happy,
Gently spin out the silken thread of life!

INSCRIPTION FOR A MOSS-HOUSE IN THE SHRUBBERY AT WESTON.

Here, free from riot's hated noise,
Be mine, ye calmer, purer joys,
A book or friend bestows;
Far from the storms that shake the great,
Contentment's gale shall fan my seat,
And sweeten my repose.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF SIR WILLIAM RUSSEL.

Doom'd, as I am, in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past;
Deprived of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost;
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mein,
The dull effect of humor, or of spleen!
Still, still, I mourn, with each returning day,
Him* snatch'd by fate in early youth away;
And her—thro' tedious years of doubt and pain,
Fix'd in her choice, and faithful—but in vain!
O prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
Whose eye ne'er yet refus'd the wretch a tear;
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows
Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes;

* Sir William Russel, the favorite friend of the young poet.

See me—ere yet my destin'd course half done,
Cast forth a wand'rer on a world unknown!
See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
And ready tears wait only leave to flow!
Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
All that delights the happy—palls with me!

ON THE HIGH PRICE OF FISH.

Cocoa-nut naught,
Fish too dear,
None must be bought
For us that are here:

No lobster on earth,
That ever I saw,
To me would be worth
Sixpence a claw.

So, dear madam, wait
Till fish can be got
At a reas'nable rate,
Whether lobster or not;

Till the French and the Dutch
Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much
And as oft as you please.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

A noble theme demands a noble verse,
In such I thank you for your fine oysters.
The barrel was magnificently large,
But, being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd;
For, when the messenger whom we despatch'd
Inquir'd for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd;
Denying that his wagon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which, your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;
In consequence of which some chanc'd to die,
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.
Now Madam says, (and what she says must still
Deserve attention, say she what she will,)
That what we call the diligence, be-case
It goes to London with a swifter pace,
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
Returning downward with a pace as swift;
And therefore recommends it with this aim—
To save at least three days,—the price the same;
For though it will not carry or convey [may,
For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you
For oyster bred upon the salt sea-shore,
Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.

News have I none that I can deign to write,
Save that it rain'd prodigiously last night;
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
Caught in the first beginning of the show'r;
But walking, running, and with much ado,
Got home—just time enough to be wet through,
Yet both are well, and, wond'rous to be told,
Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;
And wishing just the same good hap to you,
We say, good Madam, and good Sir, adieu!

VERSES PRINTED BY HIMSELF ON A FLOOD AT OLNEY.

To watch the storms, and hear the sky
Give all our almanacks the lie;
To shake with cold, and see the plains
In autumn drown'd with wintry rains;
'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
And wish myself a Dutch mynheer;
I then should have no need of wit;
For lumpish Hollander unfit!
Nor should I then repine at mud,
Or meadows deluged with a flood;
But in a bog live well content,
And find it just my element;
Should be a clod, and not a man;
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
With charitable aid to drag
My mind out of its proper quag;
Should have the genius of a boor,
And no ambition to have more.

EXTRACT FROM A SUNDAY-SCHOOL HYMN.

Hear, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r,
In heaven, thy dwelling-place,
From infants, made the public care,
And taught to seek thy face!

Thanks for thy word, and for thy day,
And grant us, we implore,
Never to waste in sinful play
Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear—but, oh! impart
To each desires sincere,
That we may listen with our heart,
And learn, as well as hear.

ON THE RECEIPT OF A HAMPER.

(in the manner of homer.)

The straw-stuff'd hamper with its ruthless steel
He open'd, cutting sheer th' inserted cords
Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came
The rustling package first, bright straw of wheat,
Or oats, or barley; next a bottle green
Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distill'd
Drop after drop odorous, by the art
Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

ON THE NEGLECT OF HOMER.

Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
And tune his harp at Rhedicina's door,
The rich old vixen would exclaim, (I fear,)
"Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

The Rev. John Newton has formed too prominent a feature in the life and correspondence of Cowper, and is too intimately associated with his endeared name, not to require a brief notice of the leading events of his life, on introducing those beautiful Olney Hymns which were written by Cowper. Any detailed statement is rendered unnecessary by his own memoir of himself,* and a subsequent one by the Rev. Mr. Cecil. The life of Newton abounds with the most extraordinary incidents, resembling the fictions of romance, rather than the realities of common life. But the hand of God is so visible, and the ultimate triumph of divine grace is so signally displayed amidst the most daring provocations, as to render it one of the most remarkable biographical memoirs ever submitted to the public eye.

The Rev. John Newton was born in London the 24th of July, 1725. His father was master of a ship in the Mediterranean trade. His mother was a pious character; and it is to her that he was indebted, in his early years, for those religious impressions which, however subsequently weakened, were probably never wholly effaced. Her premature death deprived him of this excellent parent, at an age when he most needed her superintending care. When he was eleven years old he joined his father, and made five voyages with him to the Mediterranean. His early life seems to present a mingled detail of religious duties and declensions—relapses into sin, accompanied by strong convictions of his guilt and danger—providential warnings, which roused his conscience for a time, and were subsequently forgotten; till at length, by successive instances of grieving God's Holy Spirit, he sank into the very depths of wickedness. In the year 1742 he formed an attachment, equalling in degree all that the writers of romance have imagined; but in its duration unalterable. In 1743 he was impressed, put on board a tender, from which he was released by the exertions of his father, and soon after entered the navy as a midshipman. Here he was seduced into infidel principles by one of his companions, who in a violent storm was swept into eternity, while he himself was mercifully spared. Having deserted his ship, he was overtaken, kept in irons, publicly whipped, and degraded from his office. He now became a prey to the most gloomy thoughts, and seemed to be given up to judicial hardness, and even to doubt the existence of a future state of being.

We contemplate this period of his life with awe and terror. He subsequently engaged in the slave-trade on the coast of Africa, where his conduct awakened, even among the slaves, emotions of alarm and astonishment. In the midst of this daring impiety, Newton passed through every successive stage of providential dealings, from the first whisper of conscience, till the awful catalogue of judgments seemed to be utterly expended. Everything was exhausted save the long-suffering and mercy of God. His guilt was equalled only by his misery. The slave-trade on the coast of Africa was to him the fit memorial of a captivity more galling in its character, more terrible in its consequences. At home, abroad, on the mighty deep, or on foreign shores, he carried with him the marks of his servitude, the taint of his corruption, and the visible wrath of an offended God.

The divine dealings towards the children of pious parents are strongly illustrated in the foregoing narrative. We have often observed that they are generally the subjects of a special dispensation whenever they become wanderers from God. In mercy to the praying parent, as well as to the erring child, he never leaves them without repeated tokens of his displeasure and intimations of his will. He disappoints their hopes, blights their prospects, and brings upon them the day of his wrathful visitation. "*If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*" Psalm. lxxxix. 30—33.

We by no means interpret this clause as generally conveying the assurance that the children of pious parents will ultimately be saved. The conclusion would be too ab-

* See The Life of the Rev. John Newton, written by himself, in a series of letters addressed to the Rev. Mr. Hawcis.

solute, and seem opposed to the testimony of facts. But we nevertheless believe that the prayers and instructions of a godly parent rise up, like the alms of Cornelius, as a memorial before God; and that early impressions are seldom utterly effaced. They pursue the memory amid the tumult of business, the seductions of pleasure, and the broad path of sin. They are a powerful stimulant to conscience in moments of pain, depression, and sorrow; till at length the cry of penitence often bursts from the overwhelmed heart, and the last accents have been known to be those of prayer and praise.

We now proceed to detail the particulars of Newton's conversion. This event occurs on his return homewards from the coast of Africa, when the ship is overtaken by a dreadful storm, and death seems to be inevitable. We extract the account from his own narrative.

"The 21st of March is a day much to be remembered by me, and I have never suffered it to pass wholly unnoticed since the year 1748. On that day the Lord sent from on high, and delivered me out of deep waters. I began to think of my former religious professions; the extraordinary turns in my life: the calls, warnings, and deliverances I had met with; the licentious course of my conversation, particularly my unparalleled effrontery in making the gospel-history the constant subject of profane ridicule. I thought, allowing the Scripture premises, there never was nor could be such a sinner as myself; and then, comparing the advantages I had broken through, I concluded at first, that my sins were to great to be forgiven. The Scripture likewise seemed to say the same; for I had formerly been well acquainted with the Bible, and many passages upon this occasion returned upon my memory, particularly those awful passages, Prov. i. 24—31; Heb. vi. 4—6; and 2 Pet. ii. 20, which seemed so exactly to suit my case and character as to bring with them a presumptive proof of a divine original. Thus, as I have said, I waited with fear and impatience to receive my inevitable doom. Yet, though I had thoughts of this kind, they were exceedingly faint and disproportionate; it was not till long after, (perhaps several years,) till I had gained some clear views of the infinite righteousness and grace of Jesus Christ my Lord, that I had a deep and strong apprehension of my state by nature and practice: and, perhaps, till then I could not have borne the sight. When I saw, beyond all probability, there was still hope of respite, and heard about six in the evening that the ship was freed from water, there arose a gleam of hope; I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favor. I began to pray; I could not utter the prayer of faith; I could not draw near to a reconciled God, and call him Father. My prayer was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear. I now began to think of that Jesus whom I had so often derided. I recollected the particulars of his life, and of his death: and death for sins *not his own*, but, as I remembered, for the sake of those who in their distress should put their trust in Him. And now I chiefly wanted evidence. The comfortless principles of infidelity were deeply riveted, and I rather wished than believed these things were real facts. The great question now was, how to obtain *faith!* I speak not of an appropriating faith, (of which I then knew neither the nature nor necessity,) but how I should gain an assurance that the Scriptures were of divine inspiration, and a sufficient warrant for the exercise of trust and hope in God. One of the first helps I received (in consequence of a determination to examine the New Testament more carefully) was from Luke xi. 13. I had been sensible that to profess faith in Jesus Christ, when in reality I did not believe his history, was no better than a mockery of a heart-searching God: but here I found a Spirit spoken of, which was to be communicated to those who ask it. Upon this I reasoned thus. If this book is true, the promise in this passage is true likewise. I have need of that very Spirit by which the whole was written, in order to understand it aright. He has engaged here to give that Spirit to those who ask. I must, therefore, pray for it; and if it is of God, he will make good his own word. My purposes were strengthened by John vii. 17. I concluded from thence, that though I could not say from my heart that I believed the gospel, yet I would for the present take it for granted, and that by studying it in this light I should be more and more confirmed in it. If what I am writing could be perused by our modern infidels, they would say (for I too well know their manner) that I was very desirous to persuade myself into this opinion. I confess I was; and so would they be, if the Lord should show them, as he was pleased to show me at that time, the absolute necessity of some expedient to interpose between a righteous God and a sinful soul. Upon the gospel scheme I saw at least a peradventure of hope, but on every other side I was surrounded with black unfathomable despair."*

Alluding to the means which he enjoyed at this eventful period, for acquiring spiritual light and knowledge, he observes, "As to books, I had a New Testament, Stanhope, and a volume of Bishop Beveridge's Sermons, one of which, upon our Lord's passion, affected me much. In perusing the New Testament, I was struck with several passages, particularly that of the fig-tree, Luke xiii.; the case of

* See "Life of Newton," prefixed to his works.

St. Paul, 1 Tim. i.; but particularly the prodigal, Luke xv.—a case I thought had never been so clearly exemplified as by myself. And then the goodness of the father in receiving, nay, in running to meet such a son, and this intended only to illustrate the Lord's goodness to returning sinners; this gained upon me. I continued much in prayer; I saw that the Lord had interposed *so far* to save me; and I hoped he would do more. The outward circumstances helped in this place to make me still more serious and earnest in crying to Him who alone could relieve me; and sometimes I thought I could be content to die even for want of food, if I might but die a believer. Thus far I was answered, that before we arrived in Ireland I had a satisfactory evidence in my own mind of the truth of the gospel, as considered in itself, and its exact suitableness to answer all my needs. I saw that, by the way there pointed out, God might declare, not his mercy only, but his justice also, in the pardon of sin, on account of the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. I stood in need of an Almighty Saviour, and such a one I found described in the New Testament. Thus far the Lord had wrought a marvellous thing. I was no longer an infidel. I heartily renounced my former profaneness; I had taken up some right notions; was seriously disposed, and sincerely touched with a sense of the undeserved mercy I had received, in being brought safe through so many dangers. I was sorry for my past misspent life, and purposed an immediate reformation; I was quite freed from the habit of swearing, which seemed to have been deeply rooted in me as a second nature. Thus, to all appearance, I was a new man. But though I cannot doubt that this change, so far as it prevailed, was wrought by the Spirit and power of God; yet still I was greatly deficient in many respects. I was, in some degree, affected with a sense of my more enormous sins, but I was little aware of the innate evils of my heart. I had no apprehension of the spirituality and extent of the law of God. The hidden life of a Christian, as it consists in communion with God by Jesus Christ, and a continual dependence on him for hourly supplies of wisdom, strength, and comfort, was a mystery, of which I had as yet no knowledge. I acknowledged the Lord's mercy in pardoning what was past, but depended chiefly upon my own resolution to do better for the time to come. I had no Christian friend or faithful minister to advise me that my strength was no more than my righteousness: and though I soon began to inquire for serious books, yet, not having spiritual discernment, I frequently made a wrong choice; and I was not brought in the way of evangelical preaching or conversation, (except a few times, when I heard but understood not,) for six years after this period. Those things the Lord was pleased to discover to me gradually. I learned them here a little and there a little, by my own painful experience, at a distance from the common means and ordinances, and in the midst of the same course of evil company, and bad examples, as I had been conversant with for some time. From this period I could no more make a mock at sin, or jest with holy things: I no more questioned the truth of Scripture, or lost a sense of the rebukes of conscience. Therefore I consider this as the beginning of my return to God, or rather of his return to me; but I cannot consider myself to have been a believer (in the full sense of the word) till a considerable time afterwards."*

Progressive conversions seem to be most agreeable to the analogy of nature: and though we by no means question the reality of instantaneous conversions, or consider that the grace of God is limited either to time, manner or degree; yet we have generally observed that they partake too much of a spirit of excitement to form a sure and safe test. The excitement of the senses is a dangerous ingredient in holy things, because they are equally susceptible of opposite impressions. Those conversions ultimately prove most solid and abiding, where the understanding is enlightened, the conscience roused, and the will subdued by the simultaneous energy and power that moves and purifies the feelings and affections of the heart.

But in whatever manner it was accomplished, the conversion of Newton claims to rank among those memorable acts of divine grace which have invested the names of a Rochester, a Gardiner, and a Bunyan, with so much interest and celebrity. May we not also mark its affinity to the still more distinguished examples recorded in the sacred writings, such as a Manasses, or a Saul, prototypes not less in guilt than in mercy? If any man could justly appropriate the words of the apostle, surely that individual was Newton. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. i. 16. Instances like these abound in edifying truths. They exhibit the divine sovereignty in legible and unerring characters. They serve also to confound the pride and self-glory of man by proving that "base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. i. 28, 29.

But above all they proclaim that no man is beyond the reach of mercy, however guilty, depraved, or lost; and that the door is never closed to the broken and contrite spirit. Let

* Life of Newton.

not then the penitent despair, nor yet the impenitent presume; but rightly interpreting these wonderful and gracious dispensations, may many a returning prodigal, like Newton, exclaim in the accents of adoring faith and love, "Who is God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy." Micah vii. 18.

That we may proceed to the more important events of Newton's subsequent history, we shall here briefly mention, that at this time he wrote to his father, who was then going out as Governor of York Fort, in Hudson's Bay, where he died in 1750. He previously gave his consent to his son's marriage with Miss Catlett, the lady who had been the object of so long and romantic an attachment. They were united on the 1st of February, 1750. After this event he made three voyages to Africa, devoting much of his time to classical and devotional studies, and performing public worship in his vessel according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, twice every day. The moral change which his mind had experienced is expressed in the following beautiful and edifying manner, strongly exemplifying the power of divine grace to raise and elevate the soul.

"To be at sea in these circumstances, withdrawn out of the reach of innumerable temptations, with opportunity and turn of mind disposed to observe the wonders of God in the great deep, with the two noblest objects of sight, the expanded *heavens* and the expanded *ocean*, continually in view; and where evident interpositions of Divine Providence, in answer to prayer, occur almost every day; these are helps to quicken and confirm the life of faith, which, in a good measure, supply to a religious sailor the want of those advantages which can be enjoyed only upon the shore. And, indeed, though my knowledge of spiritual things, as knowledge is usually estimated, was at this time very small; yet I sometimes look back with regret on these scenes. I never knew sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion, than in my two last voyages to Guinea, when I was either almost secluded from society on shipboard, or when on shore amongst the natives. I have wandered through the woods, reflecting on the singular goodness of the Lord to me, in a place where, perhaps, there was not a person that knew Him for some thousands of miles round about me.

"In desert woods, with thee, my God,
Where human footsteps never trod,
How happy could I be;
Thou my repose from care, my light,
Amidst the darkness of the night,
In solitude my company."*

His views on the subject of the slave-trade are thus recorded by himself.

"During the time I was engaged in the slave-trade, I never had the least scruple as to its lawfulness. I was upon the whole satisfied with it, as the appointment Providence had marked out for me; yet it was, in many respects, far from eligible. It was indeed, accounted a genteel employment, and usually very profitable, though to me it did not prove so, the Lord seeing that a large increase of wealth would not be good for me. However, I considered myself as a sort of a *gaoler* or *turnkey*, and I was sometimes shocked with an employment that was perpetually conversant with chains, bolts and shackles. In this view I had often petitioned in my prayers that the Lord, in his own time, would be pleased to fix me in a more humane calling, and, if it might be, place me where I might have more frequent converse with his people and ordinances, and be freed from those long separations from home which very often were hard to bear. My prayers were now answered, though in a way which I little expected."*

The circumstance to which he alludes may be briefly stated. When he was within two days of sailing on a new voyage, and to all appearance in good health, he was suddenly seized with a fit, which deprived him of sense and motion. It lasted about an hour, but left behind such symptoms as induced the physicians to judge that it would not be safe or prudent to proceed on the voyage. The event was remarkable. The person who was appointed to take his place, most of the officers, and many of the crew died, and the vessel was brought back to Liverpool with great difficulty.†

Thus ended Newton's connexion with Africa and the slave-trade and with a sea-faring mode of life. He was destined for higher ends, and the providence and grace of God soon pointed out a sphere more suited to his newly acquired views, and presenting ample means for extended usefulness.

"And now," he observes, "having reason to close with the Apostle's determination, 'to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,' I devoted my life to the prosecution of spiritual knowledge, and resolved to pursue nothing but in subservience to this main design."‡ With this view he acquired a sufficient proficiency in the Greek language, so as to read with facility the New Testament and Septuagint; he then entered upon the study of the Hebrew, and two

* These lines are a translation from the following well-known passage of Propertius; Newton piously applying to the Creator what the poet addresses to the creature.

Sic ego desertis possim bene vivere sylvis,
Quo nulla humano sit via trita pede.
Tu mihi curarum requies, in nocte vel atrâ
Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis.

See *Life of Newton.*

* Life of Newton. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

years afterwards engaged in the Syriac, besides reading the best writers in divinity, and attending on the ministry of men distinguished for their piety and their scriptural views. In reference to his own entrance on the sacred office, he thus states his sentiments.

"One word concerning my views to the *ministry*, and I have done. I have told you, that this was my dear mother's hope concerning me; but her death and the scenes of life in which I afterwards engaged, seemed to cut off the probability. The first desires of this sort in my own mind arose many years ago, from reflection on Gal. i. 23, 24. 'But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.' I could not but wish for such a public opportunity to testify the riches of divine grace. I thought I was, above most living, a fit person to proclaim that faithful saying, 'That Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners;' and as my life had been full of remarkable turns, and I seemed selected to show what the Lord could do, I was in some hopes that perhaps, sooner or later, he might call me into this service."*

This choice of Newton seemed to be not only a natural consequence of his newly-acquired state of mind, but to be in perfect conformity with those leadings of Providence which we have so fully recorded. Who so fit to proclaim the adorable mercy and goodness of God, the freeness of his grace, the severity of his justice, and the tenderness of his love, as he who had so recently gone through the whole of the mighty process? Who could trace the natural obduracy and corruption of the human heart, the rebellion of the will, the vile slavery of sin, and the power that breaks its fetters, like him whose past history so forcibly illustrated these truths? Men cannot teach others till they themselves are first taught of God; and so long as this necessary discipline is wanting preaching is but a sublime and empty declamation.

Newton being further confirmed in his resolution by the judgment of some Christian friends, received a title to a curacy in Yorkshire, Dec. 16, 1758, and applied to the Archbishop of York, Dr. Gilbert, for ordination. As he had not however graduated at the University, he was rejected, the Archbishop alleging the rules and canons of the church. Four years after this period, in 1762, having experienced a continuance of the same difficulties, and conscious that he was burying his talents, he was about to direct his zeal in another channel, when he was restrained by the influence of his wife. In reference to this trial, he makes the following reflection. "The exercises of my mind upon this point, I believe, have not been peculiar to myself. I have known several persons, sensible, pious, of competent abilities, and cordially attached to the established church, who, being wearied out with repeated refusals of ordination, and, perhaps, not having the advantage of such an adviser as I had, have at length struck into the itinerant path, or settled among the Dissenters. Some of these, yet living, are men of respectable characters and useful in their ministry. But their influence, which would once have been serviceable to the true interests of the church of England, now rather operates against it."

Finally, being recommended by the Earl of Dartmouth* to Dr. Green, Bishop of Lincoln, of whose candor and kindness he speaks with much respect, he was ordained deacon at Buckden, April 29, 1764, and appointed to the curacy of Olney, Bucks. He received priest's orders the year following.

In this sphere of duty Newton continued nearly sixteen years exercising the functions of his office with exemplary fidelity, going from house to house, and exhibiting a pattern of an excellent parish priest. By the munificence of John Thornton, Esq., he was enabled to exercise the rites of hospitality and to dispense relief effectually to the poor. "Be hospitable," said Mr. Thornton, "and keep an open house for such as are worthy of entertainment. Help the poor and needy. I will statedly allow you 200*l.* a year, and readily send whatever you have occasion to draw for more." Newton once observed, that he thought he had received of Mr. Thornton upwards of 3,000*l.* in this way, during the time he resided at Olney.†

Such traits do honor to human nature.

One of the incidents which distinguishes the residence of Newton at Olney is his friendship and intercourse with Cowper. It is said, that this intercourse was injurious to the poet, and that Newton's peculiar views, which were Calvinistic, increased the morbid turn of his mind. The doctrinal sentiments of Newton we shall shortly consider, without however entering upon a lengthened discussion unsuited to the character of the present work. But we hesitate not to affirm that though the standard of Newton was unquestionably more Calvinistic than what is generally adopted by the clergy in these times, the main doctrines which he held were the common fundamental principles of the

* Life of Newton.

* Lord Dartmouth was the patron of the living of Olney and distinguished for his piety. It is due to this noble family to state, that in no instance has a vacancy in the living ever been filled up but in subserviency to the interests of true religion.

† Cecil's Memoir of Newton.

Christian faith, and that no preacher could have been more practical in his views. In other respects, Newton was social in his spirit, affectionate in his feelings, and cultivated in his understanding. Having had ample means of ascertaining his real character, the editor can with truth assert that no man was more beloved, admired, and respected.

We next examine Newton's *doctrinal views.*

The doctrines of Newton embraced all those great fundamental truths which distinguish the period of the reformation, and were continued downwards to the times of Charles I., when an evident departure from sound doctrine is perceptible in the writers of that age, as well as in those which succeeded.* We claim for Newton the praise of having been one among a few faithful witnesses who boldly proclaimed those truths, when religion was degenerating, with some few exceptions. into a system of moral ethics. It is to such men as Romaine, Venn, Berridge, Milner, Walker of Truro, Adam of Wintringham, Stillingfleet, Jones of St. Saviour's, Newton, and a few others, that we owe that revival of piety which is now diffusing itself so generally among the members of our church. These doctrines comprise the fall and corruption of man, the divinity and offices of the Saviour, the necessity of conversion by the grace of the Holy Spirit, free justification by faith in the atonement, the work of sanctification in all its progressive stages, attested by the evidence of a holy and devoted life, founded on these views and principles.

These great and important truths are generally called "doctrines according to godliness;" that is, they constitute the only genuine spring and source of godliness. It cannot be effected without them, because the principle would be wanting which is alone competent to produce real holiness. They form the vital essence of Christianity, its distinguishing and essential badge, its grace, its ornament, and glory.

Some men decry doctrine altogether, and assert that we are more concerned with the precepts than the doctrines of the Bible. But these doctrines are to be found in our Articles,† in our Homilies,‡ in the works of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Tindal, and others, the confessors and martyrs of the glorious Reformation.

We subjoin the testimony of an eminent prelate on this subject, delivered in a charge in the year 1792. We refer to the venerable Bishop of Durham, Dr. Shute Barrington.

"All that distinguishes Christianity from other religions is doctrinal; a Christian's hopes and consolations, his obligations and motives, are doctrinal points; the very means and end of his salvation, the many objects of his most earnest intention, are all points of faith and doctrine. Divest Christianity of its faith and doctrines, and you despoil it of all that is peculiar to it in its motives, its consolations, its sanctions, and its duties. You divest it of all that made revelation necessary; you reduce it to the cold and ineffectual substance of what is called philosophy; that philosophy which has of late shown itself not the friend of religion, learning, and civil order, but of anarchy, conceit, and atheism: you reduce it to the obscure glimmerings of human knowledge; that knowledge which the greatest of the ancient philosophers* confessed to be totally insufficient to satisfy the doubts and solicitude of an inquiring mind, and looked forward with a kind of prophetic exultation to the period when Divine Providence, in compassion to the weakness of our nature, should enlighten mankind by the revelation of himself, which modern philosophers reject."†

We add the distinguished testimony of Archbishop Secker.

"To improve the people effectually, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the gospel; and of the gospel, not as almost explained away by modern refiners, but 'as the truth is in Jesus;' as it is taught by the church of which you are members; as you have engaged by your subscriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the ever-blessed Trinity; you must set forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption, according to God's eternal purpose in Christ, by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the insufficiency of good works, and the efficacy of faith to salvation. . . . . .

"The *truth*, I fear, is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons, ... partly from not having studied theology deeply enough to treat of them ably and beneficially. God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But, whatever be the cause, *the effect has been lamentable.*"‡

If a solemn and admonitory warning was ever conveyed to the Christian world on this subject, it has been afforded by the conduct of the church of Geneva. By a regula-

* Bishops Hall, Davenant, and Jeremy Taylor, are honorable exceptions.

† See 9, 10, 11, 12, 13th Articles.

‡ See the Homilies entitled "On the misery of man;" on "Justifying faith;" "Good works annexed to faith;" on "the death and passion of our Saviour Christ;" Homily for Whitsunday, &c.

* Plato.

† See Bishop of Durham's Charge, (Barrington,) 1792.

‡ See "Watson's Tracts," vol. vi.

tion, the breach of which was made punishable by expulsion, the great fundamental doctrines, such as the essential divinity of Christ, the doctrine of human corruption, the atonement, justification by faith, and the personality and offices of the Holy Spirit, were prohibited in the pulpit. The people, no longer accustomed to these important truths, soon forgot them, and the consequence has been the substitution of a cold and lifeless Socinianism. Had it not been for that band of faithful men in this country, so much misrepresented and traduced, who shall say whether, in our own communion, we might not have incurred the same fearful result? They stood in the gap, like Phinehas, and the plague was stayed.

We know all that is urged in opposition to this reasoning, and we will examine its merits. These doctrines, it is said, are overcharged. The corruption of human nature, for instance, instead of being described as partial, is represented to be total. Society, we are assured, could not exist on such a supposition.

Let us listen to what Newton remarks on this subject.

"His natural powers, though doubtless impaired, were not destoyed. Man by nature is still capable of great things. His understanding, reason, memory, imagination, &c. sufficiently proclaim that the 'hand which made him is divine.' He is, as Milton says of Beelzebub, '*majestic though in ruins.*' He can reason, invent, and, by application, attain a considerable knowledge in natural things. The exertions of human genius, as specified in the characters of some philosophers, poets, orators, &c., are wonderful. *But man cannot know, love, trust or serve his Maker, unless he be renewed in the spirit of his mind.*"*

"Sin did not deprive him of rationality but of spirituality."†

Again: "God has not left man destitute of such dispositions as are necessary to the peace of society; but I deny that there is any moral goodness in them, unless they are founded in a supreme love to God, have his glory for their aim, and are produced by faith in Jesus Christ."†

What does Newton here assert that is not maintained in the 13th Article of our own Church?‡

Thus man's natural and moral powers survive the fall; but those which are *spiritual* are effaced and lost. Nature cannot confer what it is the province of grace alone to bestow. It requires a divine power to restore and quicken the soul. But what is the doctrine of the church of England as regards man's partial or total corruption? We extract the following passage from the Homily on the Nativity:—

"Whereby it came to pass that, as before (the fall) he was blessed, so now he was accursed; as before he was loved, so now he was abhorred; as before he was most beautiful and precious, so now he was most vile and wretched *in the sight of his Lord and Maker.* Instead of the image of God, he was now become the image of the devil, instead of the citizen of heaven, he was become the bond slave of hell, *having in himself no one part of his former purity and cleanness, but being altogether spotted and defiled, insomuch that now he seemed to be nothing else but a lump of sin.*"* Who ever used language stronger and explicit than these words?

Thus we see that men, in attacking these views and sentiments, are in fact, impugning the doctrines of their own church.

We merely add one more remark on the much-controverted subject of conversion. To those who deny this doctrine, and describe it as "spiritual revelry," pretended illuminations, &c., we recommend the consideration of the following passage in the Homily on Whitsunday. It refers to our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, and to the inability of the latter to comprehend this great spiritual change of heart.

"Behold a lively pattern of a fleshly and carnal man. He had little or no intelligence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore he goeth bluntly to work, and asketh how this thing were possible to be true. Whereas, otherwise, if he had known the great power of the Holy Ghost in this behalf, that it is He which inwardly worketh the regeneration and new birth of mankind, he would never have marvelled at Christ's words, but would rather take occasion thereby to praise and glorify God."

We have thought proper to adduce these testimonies, because they vindicate the doctrines o Newton, and of those who concur with him in these views. They fully prove how much the stability of our church, in the estimation of some of its ablest advocates, depends on the faithfulness with which these doctrines are maintained. On this subject we would beg to express our deepest conviction that, if the Church of England is to survive those perils by which she is threatened; if, as we anticipate, she will rise from her tribulation with renewed strength and beauty; it is to the purity of her doctrine, and to the devotedness of her ministers, and not to the richness of her endowments, or to the secular arm of the state, that she must be indebted for her durability and greatness. To be upheld, she must be "strong in the

* See Newton's "Cardiphonia." Letter to Rev. Mr. S.
† Ibid.
‡ Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, &c.

* See also Article IX. of the Church of England, on Original Sin.

Lord and in the power of his might," apostolical in her doctrines, restored in her discipline, and holy in her practice. The language shall then be addressed to her that is applied by the inspired prophet to Zion: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shall condemn." Isaiah liv. 17. Or, to use words still more emphatic, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her."

Having thus generally vindicated the doctrines of Newton, we next advert to some of his writings. We make a few extracts from his Cardiphonia, the most popular of his writings, being a series of letters on religious subjects. The following is addressed to a nobleman, distinguished for his piety.

"To devote soul and body, every talent, power and faculty, to the service of the Lord's cause and will; to let our light shine (in our several situations) to the praise of grace; to place our highest joy in the contemplation of his adorable perfection; to rejoice even in tribulations and distresses, in reproaches and infirmities, if thereby the power of Christ may rest upon us, and be magnified in us; to be content, yea, glad to be nothing, that he may be all in all;—to obey *him* in opposition to the threats or solicitations of men; to trust *him*, though all outward appearances seem against us; to rejoice in *him*, though we should (as will sooner or later be the case) have nothing else to rejoice in; to live above the world, and to have our conversation in heaven; to be like the angels, finding our own pleasure in performing his;—this, my Lord, is the prize, the mark of our high calling, to which we are encourged with a holy ambition continually to aspire. It is true, we shall still fall short; we shall find that, when we should do good, evil will be present with us; but the attempt is glorious, and shall not be wholly in vain. He that gives us thus to *will*, will enable us to perform with growing success, and teach us to profit even by our mistakes and imperfections."*

The privileges of the believer are thus set forth.

"How great and honorable is the privilege of a true believer? That he has neither wisdom nor strength in himself is no disadvantage; for he is connected with infinite wisdom and almighty power. Though weak as a worm, his arms are strengthened by the mighty God of Jacob, and all things become possible, yea, easy to him, that occur within the compass of his proper duty and calling. The Lord, whom he serves, engages to proportion his strength to his day, whether it be a day of service or of suffering; and, though he is fallible and short-sighted, exceedingly liable to mistake and imposition, yet, while he retains a sense that he is so, and with the simplicity of a child asks counsel and direction of the Lord, he seldom takes a wrong step, at least not in matters of consequence; and even his inadvertencies are overruled for good. If he forgets his true state, and thinks himself to be something, he presently finds he is indeed nothing; but if he is content to be nothing, and to have nothing, he is sure to find a seasonable and abundant communication of all that he wants. Thus he lives, like Israel in the wilderness, upon mere bounty; but then it is a bounty unchangeable, unwearied, inexhaustible, and all-sufficient."*

The believer's call, duty, and privilege is thus illustrated by the happy application of Milton's character of Abdiel, at the end of book 5, of the "Paradise Lost." The compliment to his noble friend is just and merited.

"Faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he,
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshaken, unseduc'd, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single."

"Methinks your Lordship's situation particularly resembles that in which the poet has placed Abdiel. You are not indeed called to serve God quite alone; but, amongst those of your own rank, and with whom the station in which he has placed you necessitates you to converse, how few are there who can understand, second, or approve the principles upon which you act; or easily bear a conduct which must impress conviction or reflect dishonor upon themselves? But you are not alone. The Lord's people (many of whom you will not know till you meet them in glory) are helping you here with their prayers. His angels are commissioned to guard and guide your steps. Yea, the Lord himself fixes his eye of mercy upon your private and public path, and is near you at your right hand, that you may not be moved! That he may comfort you with the light of his countenance, and uphold you with the arm of his power, is my frequent prayer."*

Such is the sweet strain of practical and experimental piety in which Newton writes, uniting the graces of composition with the courtesy of Christian feeling, and the sentiments of an exalted piety. The nobleman, to whom these letters are addressed, (twenty-six in number,) was the Earl of Dartmouth,

* "Cardiphonia." Letters to a Nobleman.

* "Cardiphonia."

the patron of the living of Olney. Happy would it be if men of rank were always willing to listen to such truths, and the pen of a Newton could record them with so much faithfulness and grace. The date of this correspondence commences in the year 1765, and terminates in 1777. The succeeding eight letters, to the Rev. Mr. S., are addressed to the Rev. Thomas Scott, and will be shortly adverted to. Mr. B., to whom eleven letters are inscribed, is Mr. Barham, the father of the late Jos. Foster Barham, Esq. M.P. One letter is addressed to the latter, as Mr. B., jun.; and Miss M. B., is Miss Martha Barham, his sister. The Rev. Mr. R., is Mr. Rose, late Rector of Beckenham, who married her sister. I am enabled to verify these facts from family connexion, and personal knowledge. Besides these letters, Newton was the author of "Omicron," "Letters to a Wife," "Review of Ecclesiastical History," "Sermons," "The Aged Pilgrim's Triumph," "Life of the Rev. William Grimshawe," an ancestor of the Editor, distinguished for his piety and laborious exertions, though accompanied with some peculiarities; I cannot however record his name without reverence for his piety and zeal. The majority of the Olney Hymns were contributed by Newton, and have always been acceptable to the religious public. They are diversified in their subject, and uniformly spiritual and experimental, though inferior, as poetical compositions, to those contributed by Cowper.

His lines on the Ocean are characterized by great force and beauty.

A THOUGHT ON THE SEA SHORE.

In ev'ry object here I see
Something, O Lord! that leads to thee.
Firm as the rocks thy promise stands,
Thy mercies countless as the sands;
Thy love a sea immensely wide,
Thy grace an everflowing tide.

In ev'ry object here I see
Something, my heart that points at thee.
Hard as the rocks that bound the strand,
Unfruitful as the barren sand.
Deep and deceitful as the ocean,
And, like the tides, in constant motion.

The last point of view in which Newton claims to be considered is, as the honored instrument, in the hands of God, for raising up others who became eminent for piety and usefulness. We pass over many instances of comparatively less importance, and select two of known celebrity, the late Rev. Thomas Scott, and the Rev. Claudius Buchanan. Mr. Scott, at the time of Newton's residence at Olney, was the curate of Ravenstone, in that neighborhood. Though strictly conscientious, and earnest in the discharge of his duties, yet his views were indistinct, and his mind laboring under strong prejudices. The sentiments and principles of Newton, so opposite to his own, excited his attention. He was unable to comprehend them, and, as a natural consequence, deprecated and rejected them. Newton presented him with one of his publications, entitled "Omicron." This led to a correspondence, which is inserted in the "Cardiphonia." The influence of Newton's arguments, though slow, was finally successful. The strong and powerful prejudices of Scott yielded, like the mists that are dispelled by the penetrating beams of the sun. He has recorded this eventful period of his life in his "Force of Truth," a book which merits to be universally read. Mr. Scott's subsequent career and usefulness are well known. He was "a burning and a shining light." His "Commentary on the Bible" requires no eulogium, its praise is in all the churches. In America alone, we believe that not less than forty or fifty thousand copies have been sold. It is now circulating in France and in Switzerland. Perhaps no book has contributed so essentially to diffuse the great doctrines of the Reformation, and to revive the piety and spirit of former ages. We do not know a more splendid trophy to the name and usefulness of Newton, than to be recorded as the instrument, under the Divine blessing, of having raised up so distinguished a character as the Rev. Thomas Scott.

The second instance is that of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan. Mr. Newton, after a residence of nearly sixteen years at Olney, was removed to London, having been presented, by the recommendation of John Thornton, Esq., to the living of St. Mary Woolnoth. On a Sunday evening a stranger stood in one of the aisles of the church, while Newton was preaching. He became impressed with what he heard, and communicated to him the state of his mind: Newton admiring his talents, and anticipating his future usefulness, introduced him to the late Henry Thornton, Esq., by whose liberality he was sent to college. He was afterwards ordained, and subsequently filled an important situation in the east. He at length returned to Europe to awaken Britain to the claims of India. The effect produced by his appeals, and by his celebrated sermon, "The Star in the East," will long be remembered. He was eminently instrumental in rousing public attention to the duty of evangelizing India.

The stranger whose history we have thus briefly recorded was the Rev. Claudius Buchanan.

Such is the history of Newton, abounding in the most singular and eventful incidents, and exhibiting a man not less distinguished by his piety than by his acknowledged talents and great usefulness. The moral truths that

it conveys are both numerous and highly instructive. To parents it is fraught with the greatest encouragement, by proving that early impressions of piety, however they may seem to be extinguished by a long course of impenitence, may subsequently revive, though probably under the most solemn dispensations: "Thou shalt be visited of the Lord with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." Isaiah xxix. 6. The mercy that spares in the midst of manifold provocations; the long-suffering and goodness of God; the doctrine of a particular Providence; the strivings of his Spirit; the necessity of the conversion of the soul to God; and the ultimate triumphs of his grace; how forcibly have these truths been illustrated in the foregoing narrative! Reader, adore the wonderful power and grace of God! See what this grace has done for others! Learn what it is capable of effecting for yourself, and what an instrument of extended usefulness Providence may render you, when your own heart is once renewed by his Spirit! Who shall trace the final consequences of a single soul thus brought to God! The last great day alone can reveal the issue. If then you have not yet entered on this heavenly road, make *the grand experiment* in the strength and power of God. "It is high time to awake out of sleep." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." *Save thyself and others.* Flee to the cross of Christ for pardon and mercy. Read the neglected Bible. Pour out the heart in fervent, persevering prayer; and let thy faith be quickened, and thy fears assuaged by the gracious assurance, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matt. xxi. 22.

He died at his residence in Coleman-street Buildings, London, Dec. 21, 1807, in his 83rd year.

The following epitaph, composed by himself, is inscribed on a plain marble tablet, near the vestry door, in the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, London.

JOHN NEWTON, CLERK,
ONCE AN INFIDEL AND LIBERTINE,
A SERVANT OF SLAVES IN AFRICA,
WAS, BY THE RICH MERCY OF OUR LORD AND
SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST,
PRESERVED, RESTORED, PARDONED,
AND APPOINTED TO PREACH THE FAITH HE HAD
LONG LABORED TO DESTROY,
NEAR SIXTEEN YEARS AT OLNEY IN BUCKS,
AND TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN THIS CHURCH.
ON FEB. 1, 1750, HE MARRIED
MARY,
DAUGHTER OF THE LATE GEORGE CATLETT,
OF CHATHAM, KENT.
HE RESIGNED HER TO THE LORD WHO GAVE HER,
ON THE 15TH OF DECEMBER, 1790.

In his study at the vicarage in Olney, Bucks, are still to be seen the following lines, inscribed on the wall:—

"Since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honorable."—*Isaiah* xliii. 4.

But,

"Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee."—*Deuteronomy* xv. 15.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE OLNEY HYMNS.

THE origin of the Olney Hymns, and the proportion contributed by Cowper to that collection, have been already stated in the first part of this work.* Before, however, we enter on the subject of these hymns, it will not perhaps be thought uninteresting to present the reader with a brief historical account of Psalmody, and to detail the circumstances which first gave rise to a metrical version of the Psalms of David. We shall extract the information principally from "Warton's History of English Poetry." Sir John Hawkins may also be consulted on the same subject.†

The praise of having first effected a metrical version of the Psalms is to be assigned to France. About the year 1540, Clement Marot, valet of the bedchamber to Francis I., was the favorite poet of France. Being tired of the vanities of profane poetry, and anxious to raise the tone of public taste and feeling, he attempted a version of the Psalms into French rhyme, aided by Theodore Beza, and encouraged by the Professor of Hebrew in the University of Paris. This translation, not aiming at any innovation in the public worship, received the sanction of the Sorbonne, as containing nothing contrary to sound doctrine. Solicitous to justify this

* Page 56. † History of Music.

new application of his poetical powers, Marot expatiates in his dedication on the superior claims of sacred poetry, and observes "that the golden age would now be restored, when we should see the peasant at his plough, the carman in the streets, and the mechanic in his shop, solacing their toils with psalms and canticles; and the shepherd and shepherdess, reposing in the shade, and teaching the rocks to echo the name of the Creator."*

This version soon eclipsed the brilliancy of his madigrals and sonnets. In the festive and splendid court of Francis I. of a sudden nothing was heard but the psalms of Clement Marot. By each of the royal family and the principal nobility of the court, a psalm was chosen, and adapted to a popular ballad tune.

Calvin soon discovered what a powerful auxiliary psalm-singing might prove to the reformed religion, and immediately introduced Marot's version into his congregation at Geneva. They were adapted to plain and easy melodies† by Guillaume de Franc, and became a characteristic badge of the newly-established worship. Germany next caught the sacred ardor, and the choral mode of service yielded to the attractive and popular character of a devotional melody, in which all might join, without distinction of rank or character. Psalm-singing being thus associated with the Reformed religion, became interdicted to the Catholics under the most severe penalties.

This predilection for sacred song soon reached England. Previously however to this event, Sir Thomas Wyatt and the celebrated Lord Surrey had translated portions of the Psalms into metre. We subjoin a brief specimen from each of these writers, as illustrating the style and poetical pretensions of that early period of English literature.

PSALM XXXII.—*Beati quorum, &c.*

Oh! happy are they that have forgiveness got
Of their offence, not by their penitence,
As by merit, which recompenseth not;
Although that yet pardon hath not offence
Without the same, but by the goodness
Of him that hath perfect intelligence,
Of heart contrite, and covereth the greatness
Of sin within a merciful discharge.—

* Le Laboureur a sa charruë,
Le Charretier parmy le ruë,
Et l'Artisan en sa boutique,
Avecques un Pseaume ou Cantique,
En son labour se soulager.
Heureux qui orra le Berger
Et la Bergere au bois estans,
Faire que rochers et estangs
Apres eux chantent la hauteur
Du sainct nom de Createur.
CLEMENT MAROT.

† This mode of adaptation may be seen in the "Godly and Spiritual Songs," &c., printed at Edinburgh in 1597, and reprinted there in 1801.—*Park.*

And happy is he to whom God doth impute
No more his faults, by 'knowledging his sin:
But cleansed now the Lord doth him repute.
Sir Thomas Wyatt.

PSALM VIII. LORD, WHAT IS MAN?

But yet among all these I ask, "What thing is man?"
Whose turn to serve in his poor need this work Thou first began.
Or what is Adam's son that bears his father's mark?
For whose delight and comfort eke Thou has wrought all this work.
I see thou mind'st him much, that dost reward him so:
Being but earth, to rule the earth, whereon himself doth go.
From angels' substance eke Thou mad'st him differ small;
Save one doth change his life awhile; the other not at all.
The sun and moon also Thou mad'st to give him light;
And each one of the wandering stars to twinkle sparkles bright.
The air to give him breath; the water for his health;
The earth to bring forth grain and fruit, for to increase his wealth.
Earl of Surrey.

Sir Thomas Wyatt versified the seven Penitential Psalms, and died in 1542. The Earl of Surrey honored his memory and virtues by three sonnets. Five years afterwards this distinguished and highly-gifted nobleman fell a victim to the tyranny of Henry VIII., and was beheaded, in the year 1547. He has left a version of the eighth, fifty-fifth, seventy-third, and eighty-eighth Psalms.*

The versification of Sternhold and Hopkins, the first that was ever used in the Church of England, next demands our attention. Sternhold was groom of the robes to Henry VIII. It is singular that both in France and England we are indebted to laymen and court poets for the introduction of what subsequently became so characteristic a feature in the reformed worship. Sternhold composed fifty-one Psalms, and dedicated his version to King Edward VI. His coadjutor in this undertaking was John Hopkins, a clergyman and school-master, in Suffolk. His poetry is rather of a higher order than that of Sternhold. He translated fifty-eight Psalms. To the above may be added the names of William Whyttingham, Dean of Durham, who added sixteen Psalms. The hundredth and hundred and nineteenth Psalms were included in this number. The rest were contributed by Robert Wisdome, Archdeacon of Ely; by William Hethe, a

* There is also a fragment of a comment on the Seven Penitential Psalms, in English verse, attributed to Dr. Alcock, Bishop of Ely, the founder of Jesus College, Cambridge.

Scotch divine; John Pullain, and Thomas Churchyard, one of the pages of the Earl of Surrey. The entire version of the Psalter was at length published by John Day, in 1562, attached for the first time to the Common Prayer, and entitled, "The whole Booke of Psalmes, collected into English metre, by J. Sternhold, J. Hopkins, and others, conferred with the Ebrue, with apt Notes to sing them withall."

They are believed to contain some of the original melodies composed by French and German musicians. Many of them are the tunes of Gondinel and Le Jeune, who are among the first composers of Marot's French psalms. Not a few were probably imported by the Protestant refugees from Flanders, who fled into England from the persecution of the Duke of Alva. Some of our own musicians, such as Marbeck, Tallis, Tye, Parsons, and Munday, are supposed to have contributed their talents towards this undertaking.

We insert a few extracts from the original version, which in this refined age will appear rather ludicrous, and unsuited to the dignity of sacred poetry.

PSALM lxxxiv. 12.

Why doost withdrawe thy hand aback,
And hide it in thy lappe?
O plucke it out, and be not slack
To give thy foes a rappe!

PSALM lxviii. 37.

For why? their hearts were nothing bent,
To him nor to his *trade*.

The miraculous march of Jehovah before the Israelites, through the wilderness, is thus represented by Sternhold.

PSALM lxviii.

When thou didst march before thy folk,
The Egyptians from among,
And brought them from the wilderness,
Which was both wide and long:

The earth did quake, the raine pourde downe,
Heard were great claps of thunder;
The mount Sinai shooke in such a sorte,
As it would cleave in sunder.

Thy heritage with drops of rain
Abundantly was *washt;*
And *if so be* it barren was,
By thee it was *refresht.*

God's *army is two millions,*
Of warriors *good and strong,*
The Lord also in Sinai
Is present them among.

Though this version has undergone many revisions, yet we fully agree with Warton, that its continued use is discreditable to the Church of England.* The translation, in its genuine and unsophisticated state, may justly indeed be considered, as he observes, no inconsiderable monument of our ancient literature, if not of our ancient poetry; and Fuller, likewise, remarks, "Match these verses for their ages, they shall go abreast with the best poems of those times." Still the spirit of the present age demands a higher standard both of poetical taste and devotional piety. They are too bald and jejune. The public feeling requires a more luminous exhibition of the great truths of the gospel, and a more experimental mode of delineating the trials and conflicts of the Christian warfare. No man has accomplished this important task more successfully than Watts. He has united the inspiration of poetry with the hallowed fire from the altar; and we hesitate not to assert, that if Watts had been a churchman, his version would have been in universal repute among us. It is already incorporated with most of the modern selections, where there is a return to the doctrines of the Reformation; and Sternhold and Hopkins are becoming increasingly unsuited to the advancing spirit of religious inquiry.

It was this conviction that induced Newton, in the year 1771, to engage in the composition of the Olney Hymns. They were designed to be the joint contribution of Newton and Cowper, but the morbid depression of the poet prevented the fulfilment of his share of the engagement. The total number contributed by Cowper has been variously stated. Hayley estimates it at sixty-eight. Other biographers have considerably reduced the amount. Some editions assign sixty-three; others insert sixty-five. There is at present no uniform standard, nor is there, to the best of our judgment, one single edition entitled to the credit of correctness.† We trust that we have the means of deciding this controverted subject. So far as the original edition, now lying before us, published, under the superintendence of Newton himself, by Johnson, the bookseller, and bearing the date of 1779, may be considered as the most authentic guide and criterion, we are enabled to state that the original number, distinguished by the initial letter C (Cowper's signature), is sixty-seven. If to the above we add a hymn *not* inserted in Newton's original edition, because subsequently composed, but which we have been enabled to authenticate as the production of Cowper, the total number, entitled to be ascribed to

* Warton's censure is expressed in very strong language. "To the disgrace of sacred music, sacred poetry, and our established worship, these Psalms still continue to be sung in the Church of England." See *History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 461.

† One edition imputes two hymns of Newton's to Cowper, by mistaking the numerical letter C for the initial of Cowper's name.

his pen, is sixty-eight. The hymn that we allude to begins,

"To Jesus, the crown of my hope."

It has already appeared before the public in some modern selections.

Of these hymns two were written at the period of Cowper's recovery at St. Albans, when his mind had received those gracious impressions which so powerfully influenced his future principles and writings. The *first* which Cowper ever composed was in allusion to this event. It is entitled "The Happy Change," and begins with the words,

"How bless'd thy creature is, O God."

The *second* was written when he contemplated retiring from the busy world. It is the beautiful and admired hymn,

"Far from the world, O Lord, I flee."

It may be interesting to the reader to learn, from concurring sources of information, that the celebrated hymn commencing with

"God moves in a mysterious way,"

was the *last* in the collection that he composed, and that it was written on the eve of that afflicting malady, which, occurring in Jan., 1773, suspended his powers for nearly seven successive years, though his correspondence was partially resumed with Mr. Hill and Mr. Unwin, from the year 1776. It was during a solitary walk in the fields that he had a presentiment of his approaching attack, and it is to this remarkable impression that we owe the origin of the above admired composition.

This hymn acquires a peculiar interest from the above incident as well as from the unshaken faith and submission which it inculcates under the darkest dispensations. It seems as if God were giving him a chart of the voyage through those seas of trouble which he was about to navigate. No man could have written this hymn unless under the influence of a real or supposed special dispensation; and one end perhaps designed by it was, that Cowper should not only convey instruction to his own mind, but be made the instrument of consoling others. Few hymns have been more admired or more frequently quoted. It stands pre-eminent in that class which refer to the mysterious dealings of God, and is singularly qualified to invigorate the faith, to check the speculations of finite reason, and to lead the sufferer to repose on the unerring wisdom and goodness of God.

We must be careful, at the same time, how we reason on these subjects. That impressions of approaching trials may be sent from God, and subsequently be realized, we are by no means prepared to deny; but that they are often the occasion of fulfilling themselves, by acting strongly on a nervous temperament, we still more firmly believe. Again, that they frequently exist, and are not confirmed by the result, is well known. On the whole, we think reason as well as Scripture militates strongly against the doctrine of impressions. There is often an order and progression in them which, if minutely traced, prove their fallacy. Anxiety first suggests fear. A too great sensitiveness of feeling, an excursive imagination, and the want of a more vigorous exercise of faith next invest what was only imaginary, with reality. It thus acquires a form and existence, next expands into magnitude, and then rises into the power and ascendancy of an absorbing idea; till, by a final deception, the impression is attributed to a divine hand. But who does not see that it is more justly to be ascribed to morbid sensibility, to nervous excitement, and, most of all, to the want of a firmer confidence in the power and goodness of God? The language of Scripture is decidedly opposed to the theory of impressions. The Bible directs us never to indulge in anticipations of evil, and to "take no thought for the morrow." An habitual trust in a superintending Providence will ever prove to be the best preservative against imaginary or real evil, and will fill the mind with the sweet calm of a holy and abiding peace.

In returning to the subject of the Olney Hymns, we may remark that those contributed by Cowper are, with some few exceptions, distinguished by excellences of no common kind. To the grace and beauty of poetical composition, they unite the sublimity of religious sentiment, and the tenderness and fervor of devotional feeling. The nearer approaches to the Deity, which constitute the communion of the soul with God, and in which the believer is able to contemplate him as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus: the sufficiency of divine grace to pardon all our sins, and to renew and sanctify the soul; the aspirations of prayer for the attainment of these blessings, and the song of praise in the consciousness of their enjoyment; the faith that reposes every care on his promises, and realises their covenanted truth; such are the subjects on which Cowper delights to dwell with a fervor which gives new wings to our devotion, and raises us above the enfeebling vanity of earthly things.

To specify all the hymns which lay claim to our admiration, would far exceed the limits of our plan, and interfere with the judgment and discrimination of the reader. We cannot, however, avoid referring to the following:—"O for a closer walk with God;" "Ere God had built the mountains;" "The Lord will happiness divine;" "There is a fountain fill'd

with blood;" "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;" "God of my life, to thee I call;" and especially, "The billows swell, the winds are high." There is a character of experimental piety pervading the hymns of Cowper, which singularly adapts them to meet the feelings of the contemplative or tried Christian. The deeper and more secret emotions of the soul; the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow; the fears that depress, and the hopes that soothe and tranquillize the mind, are treated with a fidelity and pathos, that render Cowper emphatically the poet of the heart. His hymns possess one peculiar feature which powerfully engages our sympathies. They disclose the inward recesses, and deep exercises of his own mind. But the sorrows of Cowper are now ended. Every trace is obliterated, except the record of them which is stamped on his interesting page. He has entered within the vail, where the mysterious dispensations of Providence, which once cast their deep shade on his chequered path, are vindicated and explained. He has joined "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and an innumerable company of angels, and God, the judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." There, freed from the sorrows and finite conceptions of erring reason, he unites with the redeemed of the Lord in that nobler song of praise, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

THE OLNEY HYMNS.

I. WALKING WITH GOD.—*Gen.* v. 24.

Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return!
Sweet messenger of rest:
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame:
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

II. JEHOVAH-JIREH. THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.—*Gen.* xxii. 14.

The saints should never be dismay'd,
Nor sink in hopeless fear:
For when they least expect his aid,
The Saviour will appear.

This Abraham found: he raised the knife;
God saw, and said, "Forbear!
Yon ram shall yield his meaner life;
Behold the victim there."

Once David seem'd Saul's certain prey;
But hark! the foe's at hand;*
Saul turns his arms another way,
To save the invaded land.

When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,
He thought to rise no more;†
But God prepared a fish to save,
And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine,
That meet us in his word!
May every deep-felt care of mine
Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for his seasonable aid,
And though it tarry, wait:
The promise may be long delay'd,
But cannot come too late.

III. JEHOVAH-ROPHI. I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE.—*Exod.* xv. 26.

Heal us, Emmanuel, here we are,
Waiting to feel thy touch:
Deep-wounded souls to thee repair,
And, Saviour, we are such.

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. † Jonah i. 17.

Our faith is feeble, we confess,
We faintly trust thy word;
But wilt thou pity us the less?
Be that far from thee, Lord!

Remember him who once applied,
With trembling for relief;
"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried,*
"Oh, help my unbelief!"

She too, who touch'd thee in the press,
And healing virtue stole,
Was answer'd, "Daughter, go in peace,†
Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Conceal'd amid the gathering throng,
She would have shunn'd thy view;
And if her faith was firm and strong,
Had strong misgivings too.

Like her, with hopes and fears we come,
To touch thee, if we may,
Oh! send us not despairing home,
Send none unheal'd away.

IV. JEHOVAH-NISSI. THE LORD MY BANNER.—*Exod.* xvii. 15.

By whom was David taught
To aim the deadly blow,
When he Goliath fought,
And laid the Gittite low?
Nor sword nor spear the stripling took,
But chose a pebble from the brook.

'Twas Israel's God and king
Who sent him to the fight;
Who gave him strength to sling,
And skill to aim aright.
Ye feeble saints, your strength endures,
Because young David's God is yours.

Who order'd Gideon forth,
To storm the invaders' camp,
With arms of little worth,
A pitcher and a lamp?‡
The trumpets made his coming known,
And all the host was overthrown.

Oh! I have seen the day,
When with a single word,
God helping me to say,
My trust is in the Lord,
My soul hath quell'd a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose.

But unbelief, self-will,
Self-righteousness, and pride,
How often do they steal
My weapon from my side!
Yet David's Lord, and Gideon's friend,
Will help his servant to the end.

V. JEHOVAH-SHALOM. THE LORD SEND PEACE.—*Judges* vi. 24.

Jesus, whose blood so freely stream'd,
To satisfy the law's demand;
By thee from guilt and wrath redeem'd,
Before the Father's face I stand.

To reconcile offending man,
Make Justice drop her angry rod;
What creature could have form'd the plan,
Or who fulfil it but a God?

No drop remains of all the curse,
For wretches who deserved the whole;
No arrows dipt in wrath to pierce
The guilty but returning soul.

Peace by such means so dearly bought,
What rebel could have hoped to see?
Peace, by his injured Sovereign wrought,
His Sovereign fasten'd to a tree.

Now, Lord, thy feeble worm prepare!
For strife with earth and hell begins;
Confirm and gird me for the war,
They hate the soul that hates his sins.

Let them in horrid league agree!
They may assault, they may distress;
But cannot quench thy love to me,
Nor rob me of the Lord, my peace.

VI. WISDOM.—*Prov.* viii. 22—31.

Ere God had built the mountains,
Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before he fill'd the fountains
That feed the running rills;
In me, from everlasting,
The wonderful I AM,
Found pleasures never-wasting,
And Wisdom is my name.

When, like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
Of Ocean's mighty flood;
He wrought by weight and measure,
And I was with him then:
Myself the father's pleasure,
And mine the sons of men.

Thus Wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and thy grace,
Thou everlasting lover
Of our unworthy race!
Thy gracious eye survey'd us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

And couldst thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who when we saw thee, slighted
And nail'd thee to a tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder,
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

VII. VANITY OF THE WORLD.

God gives his mercies to be spent;
Your hoard will do your soul no good;
Gold is a blessing only lent,
Repaid by giving others food.

The world's esteem is but a bribe,
To buy their peace you sell your own;

* Mark ix. 24. † Mark v. 34.
‡ Judges vii. 9 and 20.

The slave of a vain-glorious tribe,
Who hate you while they make you known.

The joy that vain amusements give,
Oh! sad conclusion that it brings!
The honey of a crowded hive,
Defended by a thousand stings.

'Tis thus the world rewards the fools
That live upon her treacherous smiles:
She leads them blindfold by her rules,
And ruins all whom she beguiles.

God knows the thousands who go down
From pleasure into endless woe;
And with a long despairing groan
Blaspheme their Maker as they go.

O fearful thought! be timely wise:
Delight but in a Saviour's charms,
And God shall take you to the skies,
Embraced in everlasting arms.

VIII. O LORD, I WILL PRAISE THEE.—*Isaiah* xii. 1.

I will praise thee every day
Now thine anger's turned away!
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding Sacrifice.

Here in the fair gospel-field,
Wells of free salvation yield
Streams of life, a plenteous store,
And my soul shall thirst no more.

Jesus is become at length
My salvation and my strength;
And his praises shall prolong,
While I live, my pleasant song.

Praise ye then his glorious name,
Publish his exalted fame!
Still his worth your praise exceeds,
Excellent are all his deeds.

Raise again the joyful sound,
Let the nations roll it round!
Zion, shout, for this is he,
God the Saviour dwells in thee!

IX. THE CONTRITE HEART.—*Isaiah* lvii. 15.

The Lord will happiness divine
On contrite hearts bestow;
Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
A contrite heart or no?

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel;
If aught is felt, 'tis only pain
To find I cannot feel.

I sometimes think myself inclined
To love thee, if I could;
But often feel another mind,
Averse to all that's good.

My best desires are faint and few,
I fain would strive for more;
But when I cry, "My strength renew,"
Seem weaker than before.

Thy saints are comforted, I know,
And love thy house of prayer;
I therefore go where others go,
But find no comfort there.

O make this heart rejoice or ache;
Decide this doubt for me;
And if it be not broken, break,
And heal it if it be.

X. THE FUTURE PEACE AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH.—*Isaiah* ix. 15—20.

Hear what God the Lord hath spoken,
"O my people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
Fair abodes I build for you;
Thorns of heart-felt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways:
You shall name your walls, Salvation,
And your gates shall all be praise.

"There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow;
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All his bounty shall bestow;
Still in undisturb'd possession
Peace and righteousness shall reign;
Never shall you feel oppression,
Hear the voice of war again.

"Ye no more your suns descending,
Waning moons no more shall see;
But, your griefs forever ending,
Find eternal noon in me;
God shall rise, and shining o'er you,
Change to day the gloom of night;
He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
God your everlasting light."

XI. JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.—*Jer.* xxiii. 6.

My God, how perfect are thy ways!
But mine polluted are;
Sin twines itself about my praise,
And slides into my prayer.

When I would speak what thou hast done,
To save me from my sin,
I cannot make thy mercies known,
But self-applause creeps in.

Divine desire, that holy flame
Thy grace creates in me;
Alas! impatience is its name,
When it returns to thee.

This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts,
How does it overflow!
While self upon the surface floats,
Still bubbling from below.

Let others in the gaudy dress
Of fancied merit shine;
The Lord shall be my righteousness,
The Lord forever mine.

XII. EPHRAIM REPENTING.—*Jer.* xxxi. 18—20.

My God, till I received thy stroke,
How like a beast was I!
So unaccustom'd to the yoke,
So backward to comply.

With grief my just reproach I bear,
Shame fills me at the thought;
How frequent my rebellions were!
What wickedness I wrought!

Thy merciful restraint I scorn'd,
And left the pleasant road;
Yet turn me, and I shall be turn'd
Thou art the Lord my God.

"Is Ephraim banish'd from my thoughts,
Or vile in my esteem?
No," saith the Lord, "with all his faults,
I still remember him.

"Is he a dear and pleasant child?
Yes, dear and pleasant still;
Though sin his foolish heart beguiled,
And he withstood my will.

"My sharp rebuke has laid him low,
He seeks my face again;
My pity kindles at his woe,
He shall not seek in vain."

XIII. THE COVENANT.—*Ezek.* xxxvi. 25–28.

The Lord proclaims his grace abroad!
Behold I change your hearts of stone;
Each shall renounce his idol-god.
And serve, henceforth, the Lord alone.

My grace, a flowing stream, proceeds
To wash you filthiness away;
Ye shall abhor your former deeds,
And learn my statutes to obey.

My truth the great design ensures,
I give myself away to you;
You shall be mine, I will be yours,
Your God unalterably true.

Yet not unsought, or unimplored,
The plenteous grace shall I confer;*
No—your whole heart shall seek the Lord,
I'll put a praying Spirit there.

From the first breath of life divine,
Down to the last expiring hour,
The gracious work shall all be mine,
Begun and ended in my power.

XIV. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH. *Ezek.* xlviii. 35.

As birds their infant brood protect,†
And spread their wings to shelter them,
Thus saith the Lord to his elect,
"So will I guard Jerusalem."

And what then is Jerusalem,
This darling object of his care?
Where is its worth in God's esteem?
Who built it, who inhabits there?

Jehovah founded it in blood,
The blood of his incarnate Son;
There dwell the saints, once foes to God,
The sinners whom he calls his own.

There, though besieged on every side,
Yet much beloved and guarded well,
From age to age they have defied
The utmost force of earth and hell.

Let earth repent, and hell despair,
This city has a sure defence;
Her name is call'd The Lord is there,
And who has power to drive him thence?

XV. PRAISE FOR THE FOUNTAIN OPENED.—*Zec.* xiii. 1.

There is a fountain fill'd with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save;
When this poor lisping stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung, and tuned, for endless years,
And form'd by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but thine.

XVI. THE SOWER.—*Matt.* xiii. 3.

Ye sons of earth, prepare the plough,
Break up the fallow ground;
The sower is gone forth to sow,
And scatter blessings round,

The seed that finds a stony soil,
Shoots forth a hasty blade;
But ill repays the sower's toil,
Soon wither'd, scorch'd, and dead.

The thorny ground is sure to balk
All hopes of harvest there;
We find a tall and sickly stalk,
But not the fruitful ear.

The beaten path and highway side
Receive the trust in vain;

* Verse 37. † Isaiah xxxi. 5.

The watchful birds the spoil divide,
And pick up all the grain.

But where the Lord of grace and power
Has bless'd the happy field,
How plenteous is the golden store
The deep-wrought furrows yield!

Father of mercies, we have need
Of thy preparing grace;
Let the same hand that gives the seed
Provide a fruitful place.

XVII. THE HOUSE OF PRAYER.—*Mark* xi. 17.

Thy mansion is the Christian's heart,
O Lord, thy dwelling-place secure!
Bid the unruly throng depart,
And leave the consecrated door.

Devoted as it is to thee,
A thievish swarm frequents the place;
They steal away my joys from me,
And rob my Saviour of his praise.

There, too, a sharp designing trade
Sin, Satan, and the world maintain;
Nor cease to press me and persuade
To part with ease, and purchase pain.

I know them, and I hate their din,
Am weary of the bustling crowd;
But while their voice is heard within,
I cannot serve thee as I would.

Oh! for the joy thy presence gives,
What peace shall reign when thou art here!
Thy presence makes this den of thieves
A calm delightful house of prayer.

And if thou make thy temple shine,
Yet, self-abased, will I adore;
The gold and silver are not mine,
I give thee what was thine before.

XVIII. LOVEST THOU ME?—*John* xxi. 16.

Hark, my soul! it is the Lord:
'Tis thy Saviour, hear his word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee:
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?

"I deliver'd thee when bound,
And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turn'd thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be:—
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?"

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint:
Yet I love thee and adore:
Oh for grace to love thee more!

XIX. CONTENTMENT.—*Phil.* iv. 11.

Fierce passions discompose the mind,
As tempests vex the sea;
But calm content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to thee.

In vain by reason and by rule
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heavenly skill.

Since at his feet my soul has sat,
His gracious words to hear,
Contented with my present state,
I cast on him my care.

"Art thou a sinner, soul?" he said,
"Then how canst thou complain?
How light thy troubles here, if weigh'd
With everlasting pain!

"If thou of murmuring wouldst be cured,
Compare thy griefs with mine;
Think what my love for thee endured,
And thou wilt not repine.

"'Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
And I do all things well;
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
And rise with me to dwell.

"In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportion'd to thy day;
At death thou still shalt find me nigh,
To wipe thy tears away."

Thus I, who once my wretched days
In vain repinings spent,
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,
Have learnt to be content.

XX. OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL.—*Heb.* iv. 2.

Israel, in ancient days,
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learn'd the Gospel too;
The types and figures were a glass
In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice,
And blood-besprinkled door,*
Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood,
To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth
His perfect innocence,†
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence;
For he who can for sin atone,
Must have no failings of his own.

* Exod. xii. 13. † Lev. xii. 6.

The scape-goat on his head*
The people's trespass bore,
And, to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more:
In him our Surety seem'd to say,
"Behold I bear your sins away."

Dipt in his fellow's blood,
The living bird went free;†
The type well understood,
Express'd the sinner's plea;
Described a guilty soul enlarged,
And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of thy grace,
The same in every age!
O grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light vouchsafed to me!

XXI. SARDIS.—*Rev.* iii. 1—6.

"Waite to Sardis," saith the Lord,
And write what he declares,
He whose Spirit, and whose word,
Upholds the seven stars:
"All thy works and ways I search,
Find thy zeal and love decay'd;
Thou art call'd a living church,
But thou art cold and dead.

"Watch, remember, seek, and strive,
Exert thy former pains;
Let thy timely care revive,
And strengthen what remains:
Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,
Former times to mind recall,
Lest my sudden stroke descend,
And smite thee once for all.

"Yet I number now in thee
A few that are upright;
These my father's face shall see
And walk with me in white,
When in judgment I appear,
They for mine will be confest;
Let my faithful servants hear,
And woe be to the rest."

XXII. PRAYER FOR A BLESSING ON THE YOUNG.

Bestow, dear Lord, upon our youth
The gift of saving grace;
And let the seed of sacred truth
Fall in a fruitful place.

Grace is a plant, where'er it grows,
Of pure and heavenly root;
But fairest in the youngest shows,
And yields the sweetest fruit.

Ye careless ones, O hear betimes
The voice of sovereign love!
Your youth is stain'd with many crimes,
But mercy reigns above.

True, you are young, but there's a stone
Within the youngest breast;
Or half the crimes which you have done
Would rob you of your rest.

For you the public prayer is made,
Oh! join the public prayer!
For you the secret tear is shed,
O shed yourself a tear!

We pray that you may early prove
The Spirit's power to teach;
You cannot be too young to love
That Jesus whom we preach.

* Lev. xvi. 21. † Lev. xiv. 51—53.

XXIII. PLEADING FOR AND WITH YOUTH.

Sin has undone our wretched race,
But Jesus has restored,
And brought the sinner face to face
With his forgiving Lord.

This we repeat, from year to year,
And press upon our youth;
Lord, give them an attentive ear,
Lord, save them by thy truth.

Blessings upon the rising race!
Make this a happy hour,
According to thy richest grace,
And thine almighty power.

We feel for your unhappy state,
(May you regard it too,)
And would awhile ourselves forget
To pour out prayer for you.

We see, though you perceive it not,
The approaching awful doom;
O tremble at the solemn thought,
And flee the wrath to come!

Dear Saviour, let this new-born year
Spread an alarm abroad;
And cry in every careless ear,
"Prepare to meet thy God!"

XXIV. PRAYER FOR CHILDREN.

Gracious Lord, our children see,
By thy mercy we are free;
But shall these, alas! remain
Subjects still of Satan's reign?
Israel's young ones, when of old
Pharaoh threaten'd to withold,*
Then thy messenger said, "No;
Let the children also go."

When the angel of the Lord,
Drawing forth his dreadful sword,
Slew, with an avenging hand,
All the first-born of the land;†
Then the people's doors he pass'd,
Where the bloody sign was placed;
Hear us, now, upon our knees,
Plead the blood of Christ for these!

Lord, we tremble, for we know
How the fierce malicious foe,
Wheeling round his watchful flight,
Keeps them ever in his sight:

* Exod. x. 9. † Exod. xii. 12.

Spread thy pinions, King of kings!
Hide them safe beneath thy wings;
Lest the ravenous bird of prey
Stoop, and bear the brood away.

XXV. JEHOVAH JESUS.

My song shall bless the Lord of all,
My praise shall climb to his abode;
Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,
The great Supreme, the mighty God.

Without beginning or decline,
Object of faith, and not of sense;
Eternal ages saw him shine,
He shines eternal ages hence.

As much, when in the manger laid,
Almighty ruler of the sky,
As when the six days' works he made
Fill'd all the morning stars with joy.

Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,
Salvation is his dearest claim;
That gracious sound well pleased he hears,
And owns Emmanuel for his name.

A cheerful confidence I feel,
My well placed hopes with joy I see;
My bosom glows with heavenly zeal,
To worship him who died for me.

As man, he pities my complaint,
His power and truth are all divine;
He will not fail, he cannot faint,
Salvation's sure, and must be mine.

XXVI. ON OPENING A PLACE FOR SOCIAL PRAYER.

Jesus! where'er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallow'd ground.

For thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind;
Such ever bring thee when they come,
And going, take thee to their home.

Dear Shepherd of thy chosen few!
Thy former mercies here renew;
Here to our waiting hearts proclaim
The sweetness of thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer,
To strengthen faith, and sweeten care;
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring all heaven before our eyes.

Behold, at thy commanding word
We stretch the curtain and the cord;*
Come thou and fill this wider space,
And bless us with a large increase.

Lord, we are few, but thou art near;
Nor short thine arm, nor deaf thine ear;
Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,
And make a thousand hearts thine own!

* Isaiah liv. 2.

XXVII. WELCOME TO THE TABLE.

This is the feast of heavenly wine
And God invites to sup;
The juices of the living vine
Were press'd to fill the cup.

Oh! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,
With royal dainties fed;
Not heaven affords a costlier treat,
For Jesus is the bread.

The vile, the lost, he calls to them,
Ye trembling souls appear!
The righteous in their own esteem
Have no acceptance here.

Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse
The banquet spread for you;
Dear Saviour, this is welcome news,
Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea,
And may obtain a place,
Surely the Lord will welcome me,
And I shall see his face.

XXVIII. JESUS HASTING TO SUFFER.

The Saviour, what a noble flame
Was kindled in his breast,
When hasting to Jerusalem,
He mareh'd before the rest!

Good-will to men and zeal for God
His every thought engross;
He longs to be baptized with blood,*
He pants to reach the cross!

With all his sufferings full in view,
And woes to us unknown,
Forth to the task his spirit flew;
'Twas love that urged him on.

Lord, we return thee what we can:
Our hearts shall sound abroad
Salvation to the dying Man,
And to the rising God!

And while thy bleeding glories here
Engage our wondering eyes,
We learn our lighter cross to bear,
And hasten to the skies.

XXIX. EXHORTATION TO PRAYER.

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy-seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there?

Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight,
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

* Luke xii. 50.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Isreal's side;
But when through weariness they fail'd,
That moment Amalek prevail'd.*

Have you no words? Ah! think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To Heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
"Hear what the Lord has done for me."

XXX. THE LIGHT AND GLORY OF THE WORD.

The Spirit breathes upon the Word,
And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.

The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat:
His truths upon the nations rise,
They rise, but never set.

Let everlasting thanks be thine,
For such a bright display,
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of him I love,
Till glory breaks upon my view
In brighter worlds above.

XXXI. ON THE DEATH OF A MINISTER.

His master taken from his head,
Elisha saw him go;
And in desponding accents said,
"Ah, what must Israel do?"

But he forgot the Lord who lifts
The beggar to the throne;
Nor knew, that all Elijah's gifts
Will soon be made his own.

What! when a Paul has run his course,
Or when Apollos dies,
Is Israel left without resource?
And have we no supplies?

Yes, while the dear Redeemer lives
We have a boundless store,
And shall be fed with what he gives,
Who lives for evermore.

XXXII. THE SHINING LIGHT.

My former hopes are fled,
My terror now begins;
I feel, alas! that I am dead
In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly!
I hear the thunder roar;
The law proclaims destruction nigh,
And vengeance at the door.

When I review my ways,
I dread impending doom:
But sure a friendly whisper says,
"Flee from the wrath to come."

I see, or think I see,
A glimmering from afar;
A beam of day, that shines for me,
To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,*
It marks the pilgrim's way;
I'll gaze upon it while I run,
And watch the rising day.

XXXIII. SEEKING THE BELOVED.

To those who know the Lord I speak,
Is my beloved near?
The bridegroom of my soul I seek,
Oh! when will he appear?

Though once a man of grief and shame,
Yet now he fills a throne,
And bears the greatest, sweetest name,
That earth or heaven has known.

Grace flies before, and love attends
His steps where'er he goes;
Though none can see him but his friends,
And they were once his foes.

He speaks—obedient to his call
Our warm affections move:
Did he but shine alike on all,
Then all alike would love.

Then love in every heart would reign,
And war would cease to roar;
And cruel and bloodthirsty men
Would thirst for blood no more.

Such Jesus is, and such his grace,
Oh, may he shine on you!
And tell him, when you see his face,
I long to see him too.†

XXXIV. THE WAITING SOUL.

Breathe from the gentle south, O Lord,
And cheer me from the north;
Blow on the treasures of thy word,
And call the spices forth!

I wish, thou know'st, to be resign'd,
And wait with patient hope;
But hope delay'd fatigues the mind,
And drinks the spirit up.

Help me to reach the distant goal,
Confirm my feeble knee;
Pity the sickness of a soul
That faints for love of thee.

* Exodus xvii. 11.

* Psalm cxxx. 6. † Cant. v. 8.

Cold as I feel this heart of mine,
Yet since I feel it so;
It yields some hope of life divine
Within, however low.

I seem forsaken and alone,
I hear the lion roar;
And every door is shut but one,
And that is mercy's door.

There, till the dear Deliv'rer come,
I'll wait with humble pray'r;
And when he calls his exile home,
The Lord shall find me there.

XXXV. WELCOME CROSS.

'Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss;
Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all
This is happiness to me.

God in Israel sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil;
These spring up and choke the weeds
Which would else o'erspread the soil:
Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to his feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way:
Might I not, with reason, fear
I should prove a castaway?
Bastards may escape the rod,*
Sunk in earthly, vain delight:
But the true born child of God
Must not, would not, if he might.

XXXVI. AFFLICTIONS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD.

O how I love thy holy word,
Thy gracious covenant, O Lord!
It guides me in the peaceful way;
I think upon it all the day.

What are the mines of shining wealth,
The strength of youth, the bloom of health!
What are all joys compared with those
Thine everlasting word bestows!

Long unafflicted, undismay'd,
In pleasure's path secure I stray'd;
Thou mad'st me feel thy chastening rod,†
And straight I turn'd unto my God.

What though it pierced my fainting heart,
I bless thine hand that caused the smart;
It taught my tears awhile to flow,
But saved me from eternal woe.

Oh! hadst thou left me unchastised,
Thy precept I had still despised;
And still the snare in secret laid,
Had my unwary feet betray'd.

* Hebrews xii. 8. † Psalm cxix. 71.

I love thee, therefore, O my God,
And breathe towards thy dear abode;
Where, in thy presence fully blest,
Thy chosen saints forever rest.

XXXVII. TEMPTATION.

The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to thee I call,—
My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guard and guide me through the storm,
Defend me from each threatening ill,
Control the waves,—say, "Peace be still."

Amidst the roaring of the sea,
My soul still hangs her hope on thee;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest-toss'd and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek;
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shatter'd bark again.

XXXVIII. LOOKING UPWARDS IN A STORM.

God of my life, to thee I call,
Afflicted at thy feet I fall;
When the great water-floods prevail,*
Leave not my trembling heart to fail!

Friend of the friendless and the faint
Where should I lodge my deep complaint?
Where but with thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor!

Did ever mourner plead with thee,
And thou refuse that mourner's plea?
Does not the word still fix'd remain,
That none shall seek thy face in vain?

That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst thou not hear and answer prayer;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God,
Supports me under every load.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
I have an Advocate with thee;
They whom the world caresses most
Have no such privilege to boast.

Poor though I am, despised, forgot,†
Yet God, my God, forgets me not:
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

XXXIX. THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

My soul is sad, and much dismay'd,
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,

* Psalm lxix. 15. † Psalm xl. 17.

With fierce Apollyon at their head,
My heavenly pilgrimage oppose!

See, from the ever-burning lake
How like a smoky cloud they rise!
With horrid blasts my soul they shake,
With storms of blasphemies and lies.

Their fiery arrows reach the mark,*
My throbbing heart with anguish tear;
Each lights upon a kindred spark,
And finds abundant fuel there.

I hate the thought that wrongs the Lord;
Oh! I would drive it from my breast,
With thy own sharp two-edged sword,
Far as the east is from the west.

Come, then, and chase the cruel host,
Heal the deep wounds I have received!
Nor let the powers of darkness boast,
That I am foil'd, and thou art grieved!

XL. PEACE AFTER A STORM.

When darkness long has veil'd my mind,
And smiling day once more appears,
Then, my Redeemer, then I find
The folly of my doubts and fears.

Straight I upbraid my wandering heart,
And blush that I should ever be
Thus prone to act so base a part,
Or harbor one hard thought of thee!

Oh! let me then at length be taught
What I am still so slow to learn
That God is love, and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn.

Sweet truth, and easy to repeat!
But when my faith is sharply tried,
I find myself a learner yet,
Unskilful, weak, and apt to slide.

But, O my Lord, one look from thee
Subdues the disobedient will;
Drives doubt and discontent away,
And thy rebellious worm is still.

Thou art as ready to forgive
As I am ready to repine;
Thou therefore all the praise receive;
Be shame and self-abhorrence mine.

XLI. MOURNING AND LONGING.

The Saviour hides his face!
My spirit thirsts to prove
Renew'd supplies of pardoning grace,
And never-failing love.

The favor'd souls who know
What glories shine in him,
Pant for his presence as the roe
Pants for the living stream!

What trifles tease me now!
They swarm like summer flies,
They cleave to everything I do,
And swim before my eyes.

How dull the sabbath day,
Without the sabbath's Lord!
How toilsome then to sing and pray,
And wait upon the word!

Of all the truths I hear,
How few delight my taste!
I glean a berry here and there,
But mourn the vintage past.

Yet let me (as I ought)
Still hope to be supplied;
No pleasure else is worth a thought,
Nor shall I be denied.

Though I am but a worm,
Unworthy of his care,
The Lord will my desire perform,
And grant me all my prayer.

XLII. SELF-ACQUAINTANCE.

Dear Lord! accept a sinful heart,
Which of itself complains,
And mourns, with much and frequent smart,
The evil it contains.

There fiery seeds of anger lurk,
Which often hurt my frame;
And wait but for the tempter's work,
To fan them to a flame.

Legality holds out a bribe
To purchase life from thee;
And discontent would fain prescribe
How thou shalt deal with me.

While unbelief withstands thy grace,
And puts the mercy by;
Presumption, with a brow of brass,
Says, "Give me, or I die."

How eager are my thoughts to roam
In quest of what they love!
But ah! when duty calls them home,
How heavily they move!

Oh, cleanse me in a Saviour's blood,
Transform me by thy power,
And make me thy beloved abode,
And let me rove no more.

XLIII. PRAYER FOR PATIENCE.

Lord, who hast suffer'd all for me,
My peace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for thee,
Help me with patience to endure.

The storm of loud repining hush,
I would in humble silence mourn;
Why should the unburnt, though burning bush,
Be angry as the crackling thorn?

Man should not faint at thy rebuke,
Like Josbua falling on his face,*
When the curst thing that Achan took
Brought Israel into just disgrace.

Perhaps some golden wedge suppress'd,
Some secret sin offends my God;

* Ephes. vi. 16.

* Joshua vii. 10, 11.

Perhaps that Babylonish vest,
Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.

Ah! were I buffeted all day,
Mock'd, crown'd with thorns, and spit upon;
I yet should have no right to say,
My great distress is mine alone.

Let me not angrily declare
No pain was ever sharp like mine;
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
But rather weep, remembering thine.

XLIV. SUBMISSION.

O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,
And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears?

No, let me rather freely yield
What most I prize to thee;
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold, from me.

Thy favor all my journey through,
Thou art engaged to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

Wisdom and mercy guide my way,
Shall I resist them both?
A poor blind creature of a day,
And crush'd before the moth!

But ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still bind me to thy sway;
Else the next cloud that veils the skies,
Drives all these thoughts away.

XLV. THE HAPPY CHANGE.

How blest thy creature is, O God,
When, with a single eye,
He views the lustre of thy word,
The day-spring from on high!

Through all the storms that veil the skies,
And frown on earthly things,
The Sun of Righteousness he eyes,
With healing in his wings.

Struck by that light, the human heart,
A barren soil no more,
Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,
Where serpents lurk'd before.*

The soul a dreary province once
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire form'd within,
And owns a heavenly reign.

The glorious orb, whose golden beams
The fruitful year control,
Since first, obedient to thy word,
He started from the goal;

Has cheer'd the nations with the joys
His orient rays impart;
But Jesus, 'tis thy light alone
Can shine upon the heart.

* Isaiah xxxv. 7.

XLVI. RETIREMENT.

Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.

The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seen by the sweet bounty made
For those who follow thee.

There, if the Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God!

There like the nightingale she pours
Her solitary lays;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise.

Author and Guardian of my life,
Sweet source of light divine,
And, (all harmonious names in one)
My Saviour, thou art mine!

What thanks I owe thee, and what love,
A boundless, endless store,
Shall echo through the realms above
When time shall be no more.

XLVII. THE HIDDEN LIFE.

To tell the Saviour all my wants,
How pleasing is the task!
Nor less to praise him when he grants
Beyond what I can ask.

My laboring spirit vainly seeks
To tell but half the joy;
With how much tenderness he speaks,
And helps me to reply.

Nor were it wise, nor should I choose,
Such secrets to declare;
Like precious wines their tastes they lose,
Exposed to open air.

But this with boldness I proclaim,
Nor care if thousands hear,
Sweet is the ointment of his name,
Not life is half so dear.

And can you frown, my former friends,
Who knew what once I was;
And blame the song that thus commends
The Man who bore the cross?

Trust me, I draw the likeness true,
And not as fancy paints;
Such honor may he give to you,
For such have all his saints.

XLVIII. JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING.

Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in his wings;
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation,
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new.
Set free from present sorrow
We cheerfully can say,
E'en let the unknown to-morrow*
Bring with it what it may.

It can bring with it nothing,
But he will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing,
Will clothe his people too;
Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed;
And he who feeds the ravens,
Will give his children bread.

The vine nor fig-tree neither†
Their wonted fruit should bear,
Though all the fields should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there:
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice,
For, while in him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.

XLIX. TRUE PLEASURES.

Lord, my soul with pleasure springs,
When Jesus' name I hear;
And when God the Spirit brings
The word of promise near:
Beauties too, in holiness,
Still delighted I perceive;
Nor have words that can express
The joys thy precepts give.

Clothed in sanctity and grace,
How sweet it is to see
Those who love thee as they pass,
Or when they wait on thee:
Pleasant too, to sit and tell
What we owe to love divine;
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And eyes begin to shine.

Those the comforts I possess,
Which God shall still increase,
All his ways are pleasantness,‡
And all his paths are peace.
Nothing Jesus did or spoke,
Henceforth let me ever slight;
For I love his easy yoke,§
And find his burden light.

L. THE CHRISTIAN.

Honor and happiness unite
To make the Christian's name a praise;
How fair the scene, how clear the light,
That fills the remnant of his days!

A kingly character he bears,
No change his priestly office knows;
Unfading is the crown he wears,
His joys can never reach a close.

Adorn'd with glory from on high,
Salvation shines upon his face;
His robe is of the ethereal dye,
His steps are dignity and grace.

Inferior honors he disdains,
Nor stoops to take applause from earth:
The King of kings himself maintains
The expenses of his heavenly birth.

The noblest creature seen below,
Ordain'd to fill a throne above;
God gives him all he can bestow,
His kingdom of eternal love!

My soul is ravish'd at the thought!
Methinks from earth I see him rise!
Angels congratulate his lot,
And shout him welcome to the skies!

LI. LIVELY HOPE AND GRACIOUS FEAR.

I was a grovelling creature once,
And basely cleaved to earth;
I wanted spirit to renounce
The clod that gave me birth.

But God has breath'd upon a worm,
And sent me, from above,
Wings such as clothe an angel's form,
The wings of joy and love.

With these to Pisgah's top I fly,
And there delighted stand,
To view beneath a shining sky
The spacious promised land.

The Lord of all the vast domain
Has promised it to me;
The length and breadth of all the plain,
As far as faith can see.

How glorious is my privilege!
To thee for help I call;
I stand upon a mountain's edge,
Oh save me, lest I fall!

Though much exalted in the Lord,
My strength is not my own;
Then let me tremble at his word,
And none shall cast me down.

LII. FOR THE POOR.

When Hagar found the bottle spent,
And wept o'er Ishmael,
A message from the Lord was sent
To guide her to a well.*

Should not Elijah's cake and cruse†
Convince us at this day,
A gracious God will not refuse
Provisions by the way?

* Matthew vi. 34. † Habakkuk iii. 17, 18.
‡ Prov. iii, 17. § Matt. xi. 30.

* Gen. xxi. 19. † 1 Kings xvii. 14.

His saints and servants shall be fed,
The promise is secure;
"Bread shall be given them," he has said,
"Their water shall be sure."*

Repasts far richer they shall prove,
Than all earth's dainties are;
'Tis sweet to taste a Saviour's love,
Though in the meanest fare.

To Jesus then your trouble bring,
Nor murmur at your lot;
While you are poor and he is King,
You shall not be forgot.

LIII. MY SOUL THIRSTETH FOR GOD.

I THIRST, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.

It was the sight of thy dear cross
First wean'd my soul from earthly things;
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

I want that grace that springs from thee,
That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn like me
Bloom as the myrtle or the rose.

Dear fountain of delight unknown!
No longer sink below the brim;
But overflow and pour me down
A living and life-giving stream!

For sure, of all the plants that share
The notice of thy Father's eye,
None proves less grateful to his care,
Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

LIV. LOVE CONSTRAINING TO OBEDIENCE.

No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright:
And what she has she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.

How long beneath the law I lay
In bondage and distress!
I toil'd the precept to obey,
But toil'd without success.

Then, to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do;
Now, if I feel its power within,
I feel I hate it too.

Then, all my servile works were done
A righteousness to raise;
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose his ways.

"What shall I do," was then the word,
"That I may worthier grow?"
"What shall I render to the Lord?"
Is my inquiry now.

* Isa. xxxiii. 16.

To see the law by Christ fulfill'd,
And hear his pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,*
And duty into choice.

LV. THE HEART HEALED AND CHANGED BY MERCY.

SIN enslaved me many years,
And led me bound and blind;
Till at length a thousand fears
Came swarming o'er my mind.
"Where," I said, in deep distress,
"Will these sinful pleasures end?
How shall I secure my peace,
And make the Lord my friend?"

Friends and ministers said much
The gospel to enforce;
But my blindness still was such,
I chose a legal course:
Much I fasted, watch'd, and strove,
Scarce would show my face abroad,
Fear'd almost to speak or move,
A stranger still to God.

Thus afraid to trust his grace,
Long time did I rebel;
Till, despairing of my case,
Down at his feet I fell:
Then my stubborn heart he broke,
And subdued me to his sway;
By a simple word he spoke,
"Thy sins are done away."

LVI. HATRED OF SIN.

HOLY Lord God! I love thy truth,
Nor dare thy least commandment slight;
Yet pierced by sin, the serpent's tooth,
I mourn the anguish of the bite.

But, though the poison lurks within,
Hope bids me still with patience wait;
Till death shall set me free from sin,
Free from the only thing I hate.

Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell,
One sin, unslain, within my breast,
Would make that heaven as dark as hell.

The prisoner, sent to breathe fresh air,
And bless'd with liberty again,
Would mourn, were he condemn'd to wear
One link of all his former chain.

But, oh! no foe invades the bliss,
When glory crowns the Christian's head;
One view of Jesus as he is
Will strike all sin for ever dead.

LVII. THE NEW CONVERT.

THE new-born child of gospel grace,
Like some fair tree when summer's nigh,
Beneath Emmanuel's shining face
Lifts up his blooming branch on high.

* Romans iii. 31.

No fears he feels, he sees no foes,
No conflict yet his faith employs,
Nor has he learnt to whom he owes
The strength and peace his soul enjoys.

But sin soon darts its cruel sting,
And comforts sinking day by day:
What seem'd his own, a self-fed spring,
Proves but a brook that glides away.

When Gideon arm'd his numerous host,
The Lord soon made his numbers less;
And said, "Lest Israel vainly boast,*
'My arm procured me this success.'"

Thus will he bring our spirits down,
And draw our ebbing comforts low,
That, saved by grace, but not our own,
We may not claim the praise we owe.

LVIII. TRUE AND FALSE COMFORTS.

O God, whose favorable eye
The sin-sick soul revives,
Holy and heavenly is the joy
Thy shining presence gives.

Not such as hypocrites suppose,
Who with a graceless heart
Taste not of thee, but drink a dose,
Prepared by Satan's art.

Intoxicating joys are theirs,
Who, while they boast their light,
And seem to soar above the stars,
Are plunging into night.

Lull'd in a soft and fatal sleep,
They sin, and yet rejoice;
Were they indeed the Saviour's sheep,
Would they not hear his voice?

Be mine the comforts that reclaim
The soul from Satan's power;
That make me blush for what I am,
And hate my sin the more.

'Tis joy enough, my All in All,
At thy dear feet to lie;
Thou wilt not let me lower fall,
And none can higher fly.

LIX. A LIVING AND A DEAD FAITH.

The Lord receives his highest praise
From humble minds and hearts sincere;
While all the loud professor says
Offends the righteous Judge's ear.

To walk as children of the day,
To mark the precepts' holy light,
To wage the warfare, watch, and pray,
Show who are pleasing in his sight.

Not words alone it cost the Lord,
To purchase pardon for his own;
Nor will a soul, by grace restored,
Return the Saviour words alone.

With golden bells, the priestly vest,
And rich pomegranates border'd round,†

The need of holiness express'd,
And call'd for fruit, as well as sound.

Easy, indeed, it were to reach
A mansion in the courts above,
If swelling words and fluent speech
Might serve, instead of faith and love.

But none shall gain the blissful place,
Or God's unclouded glory see,
Who talks of free and sovereign grace,
Unless that grace has made him free!

LX. ABUSE OF THE GOSPEL.

Too many, Lord, abuse thy grace,
In this licentious day;
And while they boast they see thy face,
They turn their own away.

Thy book displays a gracious light
That can the blind restore;
But these are dazzled by the sight,
And blinded still the more.

The pardon, such presume upon,
They do not beg, but steal;
And when they plead it at thy throne,
Oh! where's the Spirit's seal?

Was it for this, ye lawless tribe,
The dear Redeemer bled?
Is this the grace the saints imbibe
From Christ the living head?

Ah, Lord, we know thy chosen few
Are fed with heavenly fare;
But these, the wretched husks they chew
Proclaim them what they are.

The liberty our hearts implore
Is not to live in sin;
But still to wait at wisdom's door
Till mercy calls us in.

LXI. THE NARROW WAY.

What thousands never knew the road!
What thousands hate it when 'tis known!
None but the chosen tribes of God
Will seek or choose it for their own.

A thousand ways in ruin end,
One, only, leads to joys on high;
By that my willing steps ascend,
Pleased with a journey to the sky.

No more I ask, or hope to find,
Delight or happiness below;
Sorrow may well possess the mind
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow.

The joy that fades is not for me,
I seek immortal joys above;
There glory without end shall be
The bright reward of faith and love.

Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,
Contented lick your native dust,
But God shall fight with all his storms
Against the idol of your trust.

* Judges vii. 2. † Exod. xxviii. 33.

LXII. DEPENDENCE.

To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream;
It is not at our own command,
But still derived from him.

Beware of Peter's word,*
Nor confidently say,
"I never will deny thee, Lord,"
But, "Grant I never may!"

Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own.

Retreat beneath his wings,
And in his grace confide;
This more exalts the King of kings†
Than all your works beside.

In Jesus is our store,
Grace issues from his throne;
Whoever says, "I want no more,"
Confesses he has none.

LXIII. NOT OF WORKS.

Grace, triumphant in the throne,
Scorns a rival, reigns alone;
Come and bow beneath her sway,
Cast your idol works away.
Works of man, when made his plea,
Never shall accepted be;
Fruits of pride (vain-glorious worm!)
Are the best he can perform.

Self, the god his soul adores,
Influences all his powers:
Jesus is a slighted name,
Self-advancement all his aim;
But when God the Judge shall come,
To pronounce the final doom,
Then for rocks and hills to hide
All his works and all his pride!

Still the boasting heart replies,
What! the worthy and the wise,
Friends to temperance and peace,
Have not these a righteousness?
Banish every vain pretence
Built on human excellence;
Perish everything in man,
But the grace that never can.

LXIV. PRAISE FOR FAITH.

Of all the gifts thine hand bestows,
Thou giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than my Redeemer's blood.

Faith too, the blood-receiving grace,
From the same hand we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
That gift had been in vain.

Till thou thy teaching power apply,
Our hearts refuse to see,
And weak, as a distemper'd eye,
Shut out the view of thee.

Blind to the merits of thy Son,
What misery we endure!
Yet fly that hand from which alone
We could expect a cure.

We praise thee, and would praise thee more,
To thee our all we owe;
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes him precious too.

LXV. GRACE AND PROVIDENCE.

Almighty King! whose wondrous hand
Supports the weight of sea and land,
Whose grace is such a boundless store,
No heart shall break that sighs for more.

Thy providence supplies my food,
And 'tis thy blessing makes it good;
My soul is nourish'd by thy word,
Let soul and body praise the Lord.

My streams of outward comfort came
From him who built this earthly frame;
Whate'er I want his bounty gives,
By whom my soul forever lives.

Either his hand preserves from pain,
Or, if I feel it, heals again;
From Satan's malice shields my breast,
Or overrules it for the best.

Forgive the song that falls so low
Beneath the gratitude I owe!
It means thy praise, however poor,
An angel's song can do no more.

LXVI. I WILL PRAISE THE LORD AT ALL TIMES.

Winter has a joy for me,
While the Saviour's charms I read,
Lowly, meek, from blemish free,
In the snow-drop's pensive head.

Spring returns, and brings along
Life-invigorating suns:
Hark! the turtle's plaintive song
Seems to speak his dying groans!

Summer has a thousand charms,
All expressive of his worth;
'Tis his sun that lights and warms,
His the air that cools the earth.

What! has Autumn left to say
Nothing of a Saviour's grace?
Yes, the beams of milder day
Tell me of his smiling face.

Light appears with early dawn,
While the sun makes haste to rise;
See his bleeding beauties drawn
On the blushes of the skies.

* Matthew xxvi. 33. † John vi. 29.

Evening with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shows an emblem of his grace,
Points to an eternal rest.

LXVII. LONGING TO BE WITH CHRIST.

To Jesus, the Crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone:
O bear me, ye cherubim, up,
And waft me away to his throne!

My Saviour, whom absent I love,
Whom, not having seen, I adore;
Whose name is exalted above
All glory, dominion, and power;

Dissolve thou these bonds, that detain
My soul from her portion in thee;
Ah! strike off this adamant chain
And make me eternally free.

When that happy era begins,
When array'd in thy glories I shine,
Nor grieve any more, by my sins,
The bosom on which I recline:

O then shall the veil be remov'd,
And round me thy brightness be pour'd
I shall meet him whom absent I lov'd,
I shall see whom unseen I ador'd.

And then, never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,
Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on my blissful repose.

Or, if yet remember'd above,
Remembrance no sadness shall raise;
They will be but new signs of thy love,
New themes for my wonder and praise.

Thus the strokes which from sin and from pain
Shall set me eternally free,
Will but strengthen and rivet the chain
Which binds me, my Saviour, to thee.

LXVIII. LIGHT SHINING OUT OF DARKNESS.

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.*

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,*
And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

* John xiii. 7.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MADAME GUION,

AND OF

THE MYSTIC WRITERS.

The mystic writers, though the object of so much public attention in France, towards the close of the seventeenth century, have never attracted much notice in this country, and are known rather as a matter of historical fact than of personal interest. It is to Cowper that we are indebted for the translation of the Hymns of Madame Guion, the founder, or rather reviver, of the Mystics; for it is evident from ecclesiastical history, that they existed so early as in the third and fourth centuries, and that the habits of profound contemplation and retirement from the world, in which they indulged, led to the monastic seclusion of which St. Anthony was the most eminent example. Dionysius the Areopagite is, however, generally considered to be the founder of this sect in the fourth century. Macarius and Hilarion are also included among its supporters. The celebrated Thomas à Kempis, in the fifteenth century, adopted a kind of purified mysticism. Molino, a Spanish priest, though resident at Rome, still further extended these views; till at length

Madame Guion, in the reign of Louis XIV., embodied them in their present form, which is known in France under the name of Quietism, from the calm repose and indifference to external objects which is characteristic of these principles.

The Mystics professed to elevate the soul above all sensible and terrestrial objects, and to unite it to the Deity in an ineffable manner; to inculcate a pure and absolutely disinterested love of God, for his own sake, and on account of his adorable perfections: to maintain a close and intimate communion with him by mortifying all the senses, by a profound submission to his will, even under the consciousness of perdition, and by an internal sanctity of heart, strengthened by a holy and sublime contemplation. We shall shortly examine this system, and inquire how far this indifference to salvation, from a supposed conformity to the will of God, is founded either on reason or Scripture; and whether the pure love of God, independent of his love to us, and of our personal interest in the blessings of redemption, is a state of mind to be generally attained.

But we shall first advert to the manner in which Madame Guion was led to embrace these views, and illustrate them by a reference to her own writings. After endeavoring, by unceasing efforts, and many acts of external piety, to raise her mind to a high tone of religious perfection, without being able to attain it, she meets with an ecclesiastic of the order of St. Francis, and requests him to explain the cause of this failure. His reply, and the remarkable consequences by which it was followed, is thus recorded by herself in the narrative of her own life. "*It is, madam, because you seek* WITHOUT *what you have* WITHIN. *Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will there find him.*"

"Having said these words, he left me. They were to me like the stroke of a dart, which penetrated through my heart. I felt at this instant a very deep wound, a wound so delightful that I desired not to be cured. These words brought into my heart what I had been seeking so many years; or rather, they discovered to me what was there, and which I had not enjoyed for want of knowing it. Oh my Lord! thou wast in my heart, and demandedst only a simple turning of my mind inward, to make me perceive thy presence. Oh infinite Goodness! How was I running hither and thither to seek thee; my life was a burden to me, though my happiness was in myself. I was poor in the midst of riches, and ready to perish with hunger, near a table plentifully spread, and a continual feast. Oh Beauty, ancient and new! Why have I known thee so late! Alas! I sought thee where thou wast not, and did not seek thee where thou wast. It was for want of understanding these words of thy gospel, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there. For behold the kingdom of God is within you.' This I experienced; for thou becamest my king, and my heart thy kingdom, wherein thou didst reign supreme, and perform all thy sacred will."

Hours, she observes, now passed away like moments, and she could hardly do anything else but pray. She enters at the same time upon a strict course of peñances, deprives herself of the most innocent indulgences, and succeeds so far that she could scarcely prefer one thing to another. Her senses are severely mortified, and kept under uniform restraint. She aims at nothing less than the death of the senses, and the utter extinction of self. "It is only by a total death to self," she remarks, "that we can be lost in God."

At length these continual efforts become painful to her, and she is far from realizing either inward peace or the grace of true holiness. In describing her state of mind, she observes:

"I began to experience an insupportable weight, in that very piety which had formerly been so easy and delightful to me; not that I did not love it extremely, but I found myself defective in that noble practice of it to which I aspired. The more I loved it, the more I labored to acquire what I saw I failed in. But alas! I seemed continually to be overcome by that which was contrary to it. My heart, indeed, was detached from all sensual pleasures. For these several years past it has seemed to me that my mind is so detached and absent from the body, that I do things as if I did them not. If I eat or refresh myself, it is done with such an absence, or separation, as I wonder at, and with an entire mortification of the keenness of sensation in all the natural functions."

In addition to this dissatisfaction with herself, it is her lot to be married to a man who is strongly opposed to her views and principles. Her domestic trials aggravate her wretchedness, and she enjoys peace neither in herself, in others, nor in God.

"I could now no longer pray as formerly. Heaven seemed shut to me, and I thought justly too. I could get no consolation, nor make any complaint thereupon: nor had I any creature on earth to apply to, or to whom I might impart my condition. I found myself banished from all beings, without finding a support or refuge in anything. I could no more practice any virtue with facility. Such as had formerly been familiar to me seemed now to have left me. 'Alas!' said I, 'is it possible that this heart, formerly all on fire, should now become like ice?' Laden with a weight of past sins, and a multitude of new

ones, I could not think God would ever pardon me, but looked on myself as a victim of hell. Whatever I tried for a remedy, seemed only to increase the malady. I may say that tears were my drink, and sorrow my food. I had within myself an executioner who tortured me without respite."

We believe the case of Madame Guion to be by no means singular. Many aim at high attainments in religion, with the utmost sincerity of intention, but, being ignorant of the true way of peace, to which a more scriptural view would infallibly lead them, they load the conscience with heavy burdens, till it sinks under the weight of the oppression. Peace of mind is not to be found in self-inflicted austerities, in overstrained efforts, nor even in the way of internal holiness. This is seeking the living among the dead. We first find God, not by what we try to do for ourselves, but in a firm reliance on what Christ the Lord has done for us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." This is the only true ground of acceptance. This is the foundation laid in Zion. "He is our peace." Holiness follows, but does not go before; it is the effect, but not the cause. Mysticism inverts the order, and seems to give more honor to the sanctifying Spirit than to a crucified Saviour and Redeemer.

However specious, therefore the counsel given by the priest might seem to be, and powerfully as she was impressed by it for a season, yet it failed in imparting the whole truth. He led her to derive peace from contemplating Christ *within*; but true peace can flow only from contemplating Christ *without*. The "water" and the "blood" are emblematical of a *double* operation. Each is necessary, Christ in the heart for sanctification, Christ on the cross for justification and pardon of sin. To neglect the latter, and to fix our inmost thoughts on the former only, what is it but to make a Saviour of sanctification, and to render the cross of none effect?

In the midst of her internal disquietude, the husband of Madame Guion dies. "At last," she writes, "after having passed twelve years and four months in the crosses of marriage, as great as possible, except poverty, which I never knew, though I had much desired it, God drew me out of that state to give me still stronger crosses to bear, and of such a nature as I had never met with before."

Her life from this period was a continual scene of trials and persecutions, to which her views and principles uniformly exposed her.

Relieved now from all external restraint, this devoted woman dedicates herself to the Lord by a solemn surrender, which she calls a marriage contract, and engages to live wholly to him and to his glory for the remainder of her days.

Her state of mind, and the joy and happiness which it led to, are thus expressed.

"At this time I found that I had the *perfect chastity* of love to God, mine being without any reserve, division, or view of interest;—*perfect poverty*, by the total privation of everything that was mine both inwardly and outwardly;—*perfect obedience to the will* of God, *submission to the church, and honor to* Jesus Christ in loving himself only."

"The joy which such a soul possesses in its God is so great, that it experiences the truth of those words of the royal prophet, 'All they who are in thee, O Lord, are like persons ravished with joy.' To such a soul the words of our Lord seem to be addressed, 'Your joy no man shall take from you.' John xvi. 22. It is as it were plunged in a river of peace; its prayer is continual · nothing can hinder it from praying to God, or from loving him. It amply verifies these words in the Canticles, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh:' for it finds that even sleep itself does not hinder it from praying. Oh, unutterable happiness! Who could ever have thought that a soul, which seemed to be in the utmost misery, should ever find a happiness equal to this? Oh happy *poverty*, happy *loss*, happy *nothingness*, which gives no less than God himself in his own immensity, no more circumscribed to the limited manner of the creature, but always drawing it out of that to plunge it wholly into his own divine essence.

"What then renders this soul so perfectly content? It neither knows nor wants to know anything but what God calls it to. Herein it enjoys divine content, after a manner vast, immense, independent of exterior events; more satisfied in its humiliation, and in the opposition of all creatures, by the order of Providence, than on the throne of its own choice.

"It is here that the apostolic life begins. But is every one called to that state? Very few, indeed, as far as I can comprehend; and of the few that are called to it, fewer still walk in true purity."

This entire surrender of the soul to God, or self-abandonment, she thus describes.

"Abandonment is a matter of the greatest importance in our process; it is the key to the inner court; so that whosoever knoweth truly how to abandon himself, soon becomes perfect. We must, therefore, continue stedfast and immoveable therein, nor listen to the voice of natural reason. Great faith produces great abandonment: we must confide in God, 'hoping against hope.' (Rom. iv. 18.)

"Abandonment is the casting off all selfish care, that we may be altogether at the Divine disposal. All Christians are exhorted to this resignation; for it is said to all, 'Take no

thought saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' (Matt. vi. 31, 32.) 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' (Prov. iii. 6.) 'Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.' (Prov. xvi. 3.) 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.' (Psalm xxxvii. 5.)

"Our abandonment then should be as fully applied to our external as internal things, giving up all our concerns into the hands of God, forgetting ourselves, and thinking only of him; by which the heart will remain always disengaged, free, and at peace. It is practised by continually losing our own will in the will of God; by renouncing every particular inclination as soon as it arises, however good it may appear, that we may stand in indifference with respect to ourselves, and only will that which God from eternity had willed; by being resigned in all things, whether for soul or body, whether for time or eternity; by leaving what is past in oblivion, what is to come to Providence, and devoting the present moment to God, which brings with itself God's eternal order, and it is as infallible a declaration to us of his will, as it is inevitable and common to all; by attributing nothing that befalls us to the creature, but regarding all things in God, and looking upon all, excepting only our sins, as infallibly proceeding from him. Surrender yourselves, then, to be led and disposed of just as God pleaseth, with respect both to your outward and inward state."

There is also another term, of frequent occurrence in Madame Guion's writings, called *the annihilation of the powers or senses*, (anéantissement des puissances,) by which she means that all the senses and passions are to be completely mortified, and suppressed, in order that the soul, freed from the heavy incumbrance, may aspire to full and unrestrained communion with God.

Such is the outline of mysticism, which we have endeavored to illustrate in her own words. Indiscriminate censure would be no less opposed to the real truth than indiscriminate praise.

The proselytes made to this doctrine in France were numerous, consisting of names distinguished by their piety and rank. Among these, she had the honor of including the great Fénélon, who, though he had too much taste and judgment to adopt the extremes of her system, listened with delight when she descanted before him, at the Hôtel de Beauvilliers, on the pure and disinterested love of God.*

It was in vain that the celebrated Bishop of Meaux* exposed her doctrines with all the powers of his wit, aided by the splendor of his eloquence. Her persecutions awakened new interest. She was sent to the castle of Vincennes, as if she had been a prisoner of state.

There she employed her lonely hours in pouring out the effusions of her heart, in hymns expressive of her love to God, and of the fervor of her devotion. Some of these compositions, written under circumstances so interesting, we shall present to the reader. They are indebted for their English dress to the poet Cowper, and to the suggestion of the Rev. Mr. Bull of Newport Pagnell, who conceived that the spirit which they breathe could not fail to be congenial to a mind like his.

We shall now venture to offer a few remarks on this system.

What we admire in Madame Guion is, the purity of her heart, its incessant aspirations after holiness, its secret and close communion with God. These are qualifications in which there is reason to believe that the great bulk of professing Christians are greatly deficient. Religion, even among reflecting minds, partakes more of a philosophical than a spiritual character. The fire is in the intellect, the ice is in the heart. In the social circle, the essay, or review, how often is spiritual religion branded with the title of enthusiasm, and the wings of devotion clipped, lest she should soar with too lofty an elevation, and pass beyond the limits which a cold and calculating policy would prescribe.

Among others again, who are the professed followers of Christ, how far do all fall short in the sublime and devotional feeling of love to God! The higher attainments of Christian piety, the inward fervency of spirit, and the entire surrender of the soul, are not sufficiently realized. Men do not rise to the elevation of Bible Christianity. Religion is considered too much in the light of a struggle and a warfare, and too little as a state of inward repose and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is in this respect that we think the devotional spirit of Madame Guion may be contemplated with profit, if by a wise discrimination we can adopt what is excellent, and reject what is overstrained, legal, and visionary.

There is, however, a familiarity in her addresses to the Deity incompatible with the reverence due to a sense of his majesty and greatness. In exposing this objectionable part of her writings, Bossuet beautifully apostrophizes the seraphs, and entreats them to bring burning coals from the altar to purify his lips, lest they should have been defiled by the impurities which he had been obliged to record.†

* Life of Fénélon.

* Bossuet. † See Butler's Life of Fénélon.

With respect to the distinguishing feature of mysticism, the pure and disinterested love of God, for his own sake, and without any consideration of *self*, that the mind may, at particular seasons, rise to this degree of holy contemplation we believe to be possible; but we are persuaded that such a state of feeling cannot be habitually sustained, and that it is beyond the general standard and capacities of human nature. God's love to us is recorded in the Scripture as the foundation of our love to him:—"We love him, because he first loved us." Even glorified spirits, whose devotion we may justly suppose to have attained its highest degree of perfection, are represented as making their own salvation the theme of adoring gratitude and praise. "For thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." Besides, it is in the great work of redemption that the divine attributes are so gloriously displayed; that the most affecting appeals are made to our fears and hopes; and the most animating motives held forth for our obedience. Man's personal interest is therefore so interwoven with the display of the divine perfections, that the former can never be excluded without obscuring the glory of the very attributes which mysticism requires us to adore.

Again, the doctrine of the Mystics proposes the utter suppression of the passions of hope and fear; the annihilation, as it is called, of all our natural feelings, and an entire abstraction from the world.

The annihilation of our natural feelings, that the heart may be wholly filled with the love and contemplation of the Deity, is not possible, nor, if it were possible, would it be desirable, as we should cease, in that case, to be men, without acquiring the nature of angels. It is not the suppression, but the due control and consecration of our feelings to the purest ends that the Bible proposes: not the exclusion of what is human, but the admixture of what is divine. The apostles, though gifted with the Holy Ghost from heaven, were still "men of like passions with ourselves," and the Saviour who was transfigured on Mount Tabor, thirsted at the well of Sychar, and wept at the grave of Lazarus.

Nor is it abstraction from the world, but from its spirit, that the Bible enjoins as a duty on the Christian. "Let us open this wonderful book," observes an elegant writer, "where we may, we meet no mystical abstraction. We feel *our whole mind* to be addressed at once; no faculty, active or passive, being left without its provision. Human nature is everywhere made to furnish the machinery, which may work most effectually on itself. To withdraw the mind from sensible ideas while reading the Bible, is absolutely impossible. It places real life before us, in all its most interesting and most impressive forms; and obliges us to converse with 'men of like passions with ourselves,' even while it is teaching us the way of God most perfectly.

"Instead of abstracting us from the world, it makes it a school of wisdom to us; and teaches us, by example as well as precept, to proceed in making it so daily to ourselves. We discover that while it is the scene of the devil's temptations, it is also the scene of God's providence; and that, as on the former account we must be ever vigilant against its seductions, so, on the latter account, we cannot but be deeply interested in its various movements, past, present, and future. To be regardless of these would be to overlook the volume of prophecy, as well as that kingdom of the Messiah upon earth, of whose gradual advancement the prophetic oracles chiefly treat, and in whose final triumph all their brightest rays concentre. It is not, therefore, a mystical escape from the world to which the Christian is called. His vocation is much more glorious: he is to keep himself 'unspotted from the world;' but he is to remain in it, that he may maintain, as far as in him lies, his Lord's right to it, and promote his interest in it. He is taught this by the Redeemer's last prayer for his followers: 'I pray *not* that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' And he is still more fully instructed by our Lord's own example; who made every walk of human life the scene of his beneficence, and turned every object and occurrence into a means of the most interesting and deepest instruction."*

There is one more feature in mysticism entitled to be considered, because it was subsequently adopted by Fenélon, viz., the possibility of the soul acquiescing in its own destruction, if such were the will of God, from a profound submission to his will and a desire to promote his glory. But this supposition involves a manifest absurdity, because a profound submission to the will of God is a gracious principle, and how can the soul, which is under gracious impressions, ever be the object of perdition, or God be glorified in its destruction? The case of Moses, who prayed to be blotted out of the book which God had written, if the Israelites might be spared,† or that of St. Paul, who wished that he might be accursed, for the sake of his brethren, according to the flesh,‡ —these passages might be quoted: but they are to be considered as referring to the present and not to the future life, in reference

* See "Remains of Alexander Knox, Esq." vol i. pp. 303, 304.

† Exodus xxxii. 32.

‡ Scott and Henry both agree in this interpretation, viz., a willingness to be treated as an anathema, and to be cut off from all church communion and privileges, but not to be eternally lost.

to the latter of which they would be obviously repugnant to the justice and goodness of God.

It is evident from what has been said, that the religious views of Madame Guion, excellent as they were in their principle, in so far as they inculcated the supreme love of God, profound submission to his will, the calm retirement of the soul, and deadness to the spirit of the world, were nevertheless too overstrained to be suited to the character and constitution of human nature. Wesley translated her life, and observes, "Such another Life as that of Madame Guion, I doubt whether the world ever saw. It contains an abundance of excellent things, uncommonly excellent; several things which are utterly false and unscriptural; nay, such as are dangerously false. As to Madame Guion herself, I believe she was not only a good woman, but good in an eminent degree: deeply devoted to God, and often favored with uncommon communications of his Spirit."

The persecutions in which she was thus involved were unremitting and painful. Her doctrines underwent a solemn inquiry at Issy, before three commissioners appointed by Louis XIV. for that purpose: viz. the Bishop, of Meaux, the Bishop of Chartres, (afterwards Cardinal de Noailles,) and M. Tronson, the Superior of the Congregation of St. Sulpice. After a discussion which lasted six months, her writings received a formal condemnation, in which Fénélon refused to concur. By this apparent sanction of her principles, and still more by his celebrated "Maxims of the Saints," in which he incorporated the more spiritual part of her system, he exposed himself to a series of painful reverses. He was banished the court by Louis XIV., who probably never read his book, nor comprehended his principles, but who never forgave the author of Telemachus. By the same authority he was removed from the office of preceptor to the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri; and commanded to retire to Cambray, which he embellished with his exalted virtues. But a further scene of humiliation awaited him. His powerful opponent, the celebrated Bossuet, not content with attacking his writings, endeavored to procure their condemnation at the Court of Rome, which led to a *bon-mot* of the Pope, that "Fénélon was in fault for too great love to God, and his enemies equally in fault for too little love of their neighbor." The Brief was at length obtained, though not without considerable delay and reluctance. Fénélon received this act of censure with calm serenity, and in obedience to papal authority, ascended his pulpit at Cambray with his Maxims in one hand and the Brief in the other. He then read the condemnation of his own book, amidst the tears and admiration of his congregation; thus evincing a magnanimity which rendered him greater in his defeat than his enemies appeared in their triumph.

Madame Guion spent ten years in prison, during which she composed many hymns, with poems on various spiritual subjects, filling no less than five octavo volumes. Speaking of the period of her imprisonment at Vincennes, she observes, "I passed my time in great peace, content to spend the rest of my life there, if such were the will of God. I sang songs of joy, which the maid who served me learned by heart, as fast as I made them: and we sang together thy praises, O my God! The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world." We cannot state this fact without doing homage to the virtues of Madame Guion. The piety that could convert a prison into a sanctuary, and transform sufferings into an occasion for joy and thanksgiving, must have been elevated and sincere, however mingled with enthusiasm. Her doctrine of profound submission, under circumstances the most adverse, was no speculative thesis; it was evidently carried into the life and practice.

Who is not reminded by this act of what is recorded in the apostolical times? "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." The rigor of her persecutions, in our opinion, conveys a strong censure against her zealous but misguided opponents. But the case is by no means solitary. The world is always indulgent to the errors of our practice, but severe to the errors of our creed. True policy and humanity would have suggested a different course. Extravagances, when left to themselves, generally work their own cure; but, when visited with persecution, acquire dignity and importance, and never fail to awaken sympathy for the sufferers.

After her long imprisonment, Madame Guion lived a retired life for more than seven years at Blois, where she died June 9, 1717, in the seventieth year of her age, celebrated for her misfortunes and devotion, though her principles, which once convulsed France, and awakened the thunders of the Vatican, are now nearly forgotten.

The following selection from her poems, executed by Cowper, is highly devotional, and may be read with interest and edification. It exhibits a happy specimen of her religious views in their best form; and Cowper has given to them the charms of versification, united with a taste and discrimination that ensure their popularity. The poem on the Nativity is a sublime and bold composition, and proves that the piety which warms the heart, seldom fails to enlarge and invigorate the faculties of the mind.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

THE FRENCH OF MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUION.

THE NATIVITY.

'Tis folly all—let me no more be told
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold;
Delightful views of nature, dress'd by art,
Enchant no longer this indifferent heart;
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger and the mouldering wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.
Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes and plains, whose plenty never fails;
Deep-rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies;
The abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades,
Vainly the sun in all its power invades;
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound,
Whose verdure lives while Winter scowls around;
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep;
Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer;
Meads crown'd with flowers; streams musical and clear,
Whose silver waters and whose murmurs, join
Their artless charms to make the scene divine;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrow'd plain,
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain:
All, all have lost the charms they once possess'd;
An infant God reigns sovereign in my breast;
From Bethlehem's bosom I no more will rove;
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.
Ye mightier rivers, that, with sounding force,
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course!
Winds, clouds, and lightnings! and, ye waves, whose heads,
Curl'd into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads!
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails, [sails;
Spread with the wreck of planks and shatter'd
On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides.
While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,
Thy shores a scene of ruin strew'd around
With vessels bulged and bodies of the drown'd!
Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,
And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves:
Swift darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
Whom all the aquatic world with terror eyes!
Had I but faith immoveable and true,
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you:
The world, a more disturb'd and boisterous sea,
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me;
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.
Thou azure vault, where, through the gloom of night, [light!
Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of
Thou moon, whose car, encompassing the skies,
Restores lost nature to our wondering eyes;
Again retiring, when the brighter sun
Begins the course he seems in haste to run!
Behold him where he shines! His rapid rays,
Themselves unmeasured, measure all our days;
Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
A thousand lands confess his quickening heat,
And all he cheers are fruitful, fair, and sweet.
Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
I feel the thorn, alas! but miss the rose:
Too well I know this aching heart requires
More solid gold to fill its vast desires;
In vain they represent his matchless might,
Who call'd them out of deep primeval night;
Their form and beauty but augment my woe,
I seek the Giver of those charms they show:
Nor, Him beside, throughout the world he made,
Lives there in whom I trust for cure or aid.
Infinite God, thou great unrivall'd one!
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun;
Compar'd with thine, how dim his beauty seems,
How quench'd the radiance of his golden beams!
Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move;
In thee alone dwells all that I can love.
All darkness flies when thou art pleased to appear,
A sudden spring renews the fading year;
Where'er I turn I see thy power and grace
The watchful guardians of our heedless race;
Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
All, in all times and places, speak of thee;
E'en I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
Attempt thy praise, and join the general song.
Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
Faintly reflected in thine image, man—
Holy and just—the greatness of whose name
Fills and supports this universal frame,
Diffused throughout the infinitude of space,
Who art thyself thine own vast dwelling place;
Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
Discerns eluding our most active powers;
Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,
That veil thy face, and keep thee still unknown;
Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
Lord of the thoughts, and Sovereign of the heart!
Repeat the charming truth that never tires,
No God is like the God my soul desires;

He at whose voice heaven trembles, even He,
Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me—
Lo! there he lies—that smiling infant said,
"Heaven, earth, and sea, exist!" and they obey'd.
E'en he, whose being swells beyond the skies,
Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies;
Eternal and immortal, seems to cast
That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.
Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
How do they shrink and vanish at the thought!
Sweet solitude, and scene of my repose!
This rustic sight assuages all my woes—
That crib contains the Lord, whom I adore;
And earth's a shade that I pursue no more.
He is my firm support, my rock, my tower,
I dwell secure beneath his sheltering power,
And hold this mean retreat forever dear,
For all I love, my soul's delight is here.
I see the Almighty swathed in infant bands,
Tied helpless down the thunder-bearer's hands!
And, in this shed, that mystery discern,
Which faith and love, and they alone, can learn.
Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord!
Ye zephyrs, all your whisper'd sweets afford!
Confess the God that guides the rolling year;
Heaven, do him homage; and thou, earth, revere!
Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
Your hearts an offering, and adore your King!
Pure be those hearts, and rich in faith and love;
Join, in his praise, the harmonious world above;
To Bethlehem haste, rejoice in his repose,
And praise him there for all that he bestows!
Man, busy man, alas! can ill afford
To obey the summons, and attend the Lord;
Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
By glittering shows of pomp and wealth beguiled;
And, blind to genuine excellence and grace,
Finds not her author in so mean a place.
Ye unbelieving! learn a wiser part,
Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart;
There soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
Glow for that infant God, from whom it came;
Resist not, quench not, that divine desire,
Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire!
Not so will I requite thee, gentle love!
Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove;
And every heart beneath thy power should fall,
Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.
But I am poor, oblation I have none,
None for a Saviour, but himself alone:
Whate'er I render thee, from thee it came:
And, if I give my body to the flame,
My patience, love, and energy divine
Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are thine.
Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score!
The more I pay, I owe thee still the more.
Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
The trophy of thy glory shall be built;
My self-disdain shall be the unshaken base,
And my deformity its fairest grace;
For destitute of good, and rich in ill,
Must be my state and my description still.
And do I grieve at such an humbling lot?
Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought—
Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu!
I have no wish, no memory for you;
The more I feel my misery, I adore
The sacred inmate of my soul the more;
Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride
Spring from the sense of having nought beside.
In thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might;
My wanderings prove thy wisdom infinite;
All that I have I give thee; and then see
All contrarieties unite in thee;
For thou hast join'd them, taking up our woe,
And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,
By filling with thy grace and love divine
A gulf of evil in this heart of mine.
This is, indeed, to bid the valleys rise,
And the hills sink—'tis matching earth and skies;
I feel my weakness, thank thee, and deplore
An aching heart, that throbs to thank thee more;
The more I love thee, I the more reprove
A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love;
Till, on a deluge of thy mercy toss'd,
I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

GOD NEITHER KNOWN NOR LOVED BY THE WORLD.

Ye linnets, let us try beneath this grove,
Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise!
In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove, [ways.
For all the world is blind, and wanders from his

That God alone should prop the sinking soul,
Fills them with rage against his empire now:
I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
To seek one simple heart, set free from all below.

They speak of love, yet little feel its sway,
While in their bosoms many an idol lurks;
Their base desires, well satisfied, obey, [works.
Leave their Creator's hand, and lean upon his

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more;
Your fellowship, ye warblers! suits me best:
Pure love has lost its price, though prized of yore,
Profaned by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who form'd you for his praise alone,
Beholds his purpose well fulfill'd in you;
Come, let us join the choir before his throne,
Partaking in his praise with spirits just and true.

Yes, I will always love; and, as I ought,
Tune to the praise of love my ceaseless voice;
Preferring love too vast for human thought,
In spite of erring men, who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,
Lord of my soul! that they might all be thine?
If thou approve—the zeal thy smile imparts,
How should it ever fail! can such a fire decline?

Love, pure and holy, is a deathless fire;
Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:
Eternal love a God must needs inspire, [praise.
When once he wins the heart, and fits it for his

Self-love dismiss'd—'tis then we live indeed—
In her embrace, death, only death is found:
Come, then, one noble effort, and succeed,
Cast off the chain of self with which thy soul is bound!

Oh! I could cry, that all the world might hear,
Ye self-tormentors, love your God alone;
Let his unequall'd excellence be dear, [own.
Dear to your inmost souls, and make him all your

They hear me not—alas! how fond to rove
In endless chase of folly's specious lure!
'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,
I taste the sweets of truth—here only am secure.

THE SWALLOW.

I am fond of the swallow—I learn from her flight,
Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of love:
How seldom on earth do we see her alight!
She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,
Suspended and poised in the regions of air,
'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,
It is wing'd like herself, 'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,
And, dreading the cold, still follows the sun—
So, true to our love, we should covet his rays,
And the place where he shines not immediately shun.

Our light should be love, and our nourishment prayer;
It is dangerous food that we find upon earth;
The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,
In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely if ever she settles below,
And only when building a nest for her young;
Were it not for her brood, she would never bestow
A thought upon anything filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves, ('tis a mortal abode,)
To bask every moment in infinite love;
Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road
That leads to the day-spring appearing above.

THE TRIUMPH OF HEAVENLY LOVE DESIRED.

Ah! reign, wherever man is found,
My spouse, beloved and divine!
Then I am rich, and I abound,
When every human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,
To think that all are not thine own:
Ah! be adored from pole to pole;
Where is thy zeal? arise; be known!

All hearts are cold, in every place,
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue;
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,
Thaw these of ice, and give us new!

A FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE OF DIVINE LOVE.

IN BRINGING A SOUL TO THE POINT OF SELF-RENUNCIATION AND ABSOLUTE ACQUIESCENCE.

'Twas my purpose, on a day,
To embark, and sail away.
As I climb'd the vessel's side,
Love was sporting in the tide;
"Come," he said,—"ascend—make haste,
Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care;
They that row'd us held their eyes
Fix'd upon the starry skies;
Others steer'd, or turn'd the sails
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried;
In a moment it was night,
Ship and skies were out of sight;
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more?
No—"My soul," I cried, "be still;
If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hasten'd to convey
Both my frail supports away;
Seized my rushes; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves:
Down I went, and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe;
And I saw him turn and laugh:
"Friend," he cried, "adieu! lie low,
While the wintry storms shall blow;
When the spring has calm'd the main,
You shall rise and float again."

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his plumes, and soar away;
Now I mark his rapid flight;
Now he leaves my aching sight;
He is gone whom I adore,
'Tis in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled then and fear'd,
When my love had disappear'd!
"Wilt thou leave me thus," I cried,
"Whelm'd beneath the rolling tide?"
Vain attempt to reach his ear!
Love was gone, and would not hear.

Ah! return, and love me still,
See me subject to thy will;
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see thy face!
Evil I have none to fear,
All is good, if thou art near.

Yet he leaves me—cruel fate!
Leaves me in my lost estate—
Have I sinn'd? Oh say wherein;
Tell me, and forgive my sin!
King, and Lord, whom I adore,
Shall I see thy face no more?

Be not angry; I resign,
Henceforth, all my will to thine:
I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence breaks my heart;
Go then, and forever too:
All is right that thou wilt do.

This was just what Love intended,
He was now no more offended;
Soon as I became a child,
Love return'd to me and smiled:
Never strife shall more betide
'Twixt the bridegroom and his bride.

A CHILD OF GOD LONGING TO SEE HIM BELOVED.

THERE'S not an echo round me,
But I am glad should learn,
How pure a fire has found me,
The love with which I burn.
For none attends with pleasure
To what I would reveal;
They slight me out of measure,
And laugh at all I feel.

The rocks receive less proudly
The story of my flame:
When I approach, they loudly
Reverberate his name.
I speak to them of sadness,
And comforts at a stand;
They bid me look for gladness,
And better days at hand.

Far from all habitation,
I heard a happy sound;
Big with the consolation,
That I have often found.
I said, "My lot is sorrow,
My grief has no alloy;"
The rocks replied—"To-morrow,
To-morrow brings thee joy."

These sweet and sacred tidings,
What bliss it is to hear!
For, spite of all my chidings,
My weakness and my fear,
No sooner I receive them,
Than I forget my pain,
And, happy to believe them,
I love as much again.

I fly to scenes romantic,
Where never men resort;
For in an age so frantic
Impiety is sport.
For riot and confusion
They barter things above;
Condemning as delusion,
The joy of perfect love.

In this sequester'd corner,
None hears what I express;
Deliver'd from the scorner,
What peace do I possess!
Beneath the boughs reclining,
Or roving o'er the wild,
I live as undesigning
And harmless as a child.

No troubles here surprise me,
I innocently play,
While Providence supplies me,
And guards me all the day:
My dear and kind defender
Preserves me safely here,
From men of pomp and splendor,
Who fill a child with fear.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL AFTER GOD.

MY Spouse! in whose presence I live,
Sole object of all my desires,
Who know'st what a flame I conceive,
And canst easily double its fires!

How pleasant is all that I meet!
From fear of adversity free!
I find even sorrow made sweet;
Because 'tis assign'd me by thee.

Transported I see thee display
Thy riches and glory divine;
I have only my life to repay,
Take what I would gladly resign.
Thy will is the treasure I seek,
For thou art as faithful as strong;
There let me, obedient and meek,
Repose myself all the day long.

My spirit and faculties fail;
Oh finish what love has begun!
Destroy what is sinful and frail,
And dwell in the soul thou hast won!
Dear theme of my wonder and praise,
I cry, Who is worthy as thou?
I can only be silent and gaze!
'Tis all that is left to me now.

Oh glory in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought;
On an ocean of Deity toss'd,
I am swallow'd, I sink into nought.
Yet, lost and absorb'd as I seem,
I chant to the praise of my King;
And, though overwhelm'd by the theme,
Am happy whenever I sing.

GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO GOD.

ALL are indebted much to thee,
But I far more than all,
From many a deadly snare set free,
And raised from many a fall.
Overwhelm me, from above,
Daily, with thy boundless love.

What bonds of gratitude I feel
No language can declare;
Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing prove,
To return thee love for love?

Spirit of charity, dispense
Thy grace to every heart;
Expel all other spirits thence,
Drive self from every part;
Charity divine, draw nigh,
Break the chains in which we lie!

All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of liberty in vain,
Of love, and feel it not.
He whose bosom glows with thee,
He, and he alone, is free.

Oh blessedness, all bliss above,
When thy pure fires prevail!
Love only teaches what is love
All other lessons fail:
We learn its name, but not its powers,
Experience only makes it ours.

HAPPY SOLITUDE—UNHAPPY MEN.

MY heart is easy, and my burden light;
I smile, though sad, when thou art in my sight:

The more my woes in secret I deplore,
I taste thy goodness, and I love thee more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,
Faith, love, and hope within my soul abound;
And, while the world suppose me lost in care,
The joys of angels, unperceived, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign good!
Thou art not loved, because not understood;
This grieves me most that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.

Frail beauty and false honor are adored;
While thee they scorn, and trifle with thy word;
Pass, unconcern'd, a Saviour's sorrow by;
And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

LIVING WATER.

The fountain in its source,
No drought of summer fears;
The farther it pursues its course,
The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield
A scanty short supply;
The morning sees them amply fill'd,
At evening they are dry.

TRUTH AND DIVINE LOVE REJECTED BY THE WORLD.

O love of pure and heavenly birth!
O simple truth, scarce known on earth!
Whom men resist with stubborn will;
And, more perverse and daring still,
Smother, and quench with reasonings vain,
While error and deception reign.

Whence comes it, that, your power the same
As his on high, from whence you came,
Ye rarely find a listening ear,
Or heart that makes you welcome here?—
Because ye bring reproach and pain,
Where'er ye visit, in your train.

The world is proud, and cannot bear
The scorn and calumny ye share;
The praise of men the mark they mean,
They fly the place where ye are seen;
Pure love, with scandal in the rear,
Suits not the vain; it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,
Though poor, I am prepared to pay;
Come shame, come sorrow; spite of tears,
Weakness, and heart-oppressing fears;
One soul, at least, shall not repine,
To give you room; come, reign in mine!

DIVINE JUSTICE AMIABLE.

Thou hast no lightnings, O thou Just!
Or I their force should know;
And, if thou strike me into dust,
My soul approves the blow.

The heart, that values less its ease
Than it adores thy ways,
In thine avenging anger sees
A subject of his praise.

Pleased I could lie, conceal'd and lost,
In shades of central night;
Not to avoid thy wrath thou know'st,
But lest I grieve thy sight.

Smite me, O thou whom I provoke!
And I will love thee still:
The well-deserved and righteous stroke
Shall please me, though it kill.

Am I not worthy to sustain
The worst thou canst devise;
And dare I seek thy throne again,
And meet thy sacred eyes?

Far from afflicting, thou art kind;
And, in my saddest hours,
An unction of thy grace I find,
Pervading all my powers.

Alas! thou sparest me yet again;
And, when thy wrath should move,
Too gentle to endure my pain,
Thou soothest me with thy love.

I have no punishment to fear;
But, ah! that smile from thee
Imparts a pang far more severe
Than woe itself would be.

THE SOUL THAT LOVES GOD FINDS HIM EVERYWHERE.

Oh thou, by long experience tried,
Near whom no grief can long abide;
My love! how full of sweet content
I pass my years of banishment!

All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impress'd with sacred love!
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in thee;
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none;
But, with a God to guide our way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.

My country, Lord, art thou alone;
Nor other can I claim or own;
The point where all my wishes meet;
My law, my love, life's only sweet!

I hold by nothing here below;
Appoint my journey and I go;
Though pierced by scorn, oppress'd by pride,
I feel thee good—feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove
To souls on fire with heavenly love;
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise from them.

Ah then! to his embrace repair;
My soul, thou art no stranger there;
There love divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE ADOPTION.

How happy are the new-born race,
Partakers of adopting grace;
How pure the bliss they share!
Hid from the world and all its eyes,
Within their heart the blessing lies,
And conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours;
And if we love with all our powers
The God from whom it came;
And if we serve with hearts sincere,
'Tis still discernible and clear,
An undisputed claim.

But, ah! if foul and wilful sin
Stain and dishonor us within,
Farewell the joy we knew;
Again the slaves of nature's sway,
In labyrinths of our own we stray,
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure, who fear to grieve
The gracious Spirit they receive,
His work distinctly trace:
And, strong in undissembling love,
Boldly assert and clearly prove
Their hearts his dwelling place.

Oh messenger of dear delight,
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove!
With thee at hand, to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task but that of love.

'Tis love unites what sin divides;
The centre, where all bliss resides;
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first great cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow foregoes its nature there,
And life assumes a tranquil air,
Divested of its woes;
There sovereign goodness soothes the breast,
Till then incapable of rest,
In sacred sure repose.

DIVINE LOVE ENDURES NO RIVAL.

Love is the Lord whom I obey,
Whose will transported I perform;
The centre of my rest, my stay,
Love's all in all to me, myself a worm.

For uncreated charms I burn,
Oppress'd by slavish fear no more,
For one in whom I may discern,
E'en when he frowns, a sweetness I adore.

He little loves him who complains,
And finds him rigorous and severe;
His heart is sordid, and he feigns,
Though loud in boasting of a soul sincere.

Love causes grief, but 'tis to move
And stimulate the slumbering mind;
And he has never tasted love,
Who shuns a pang so graciously design'd.

Sweet is the cross, above all sweets,
To souls enamor'd with thy smiles;
The keenest woe life ever meets,
Love strips of all its terrors, and beguiles.

'Tis just that God should not be dear
Where self engrosses all the thought,
And groans and murmurs make it clear,
Whatever else is loved, the Lord is not.

The love of thee flows just as much
As that of ebbing self subsides;
Our hearts, their scantiness is such,
Bear not the conflict of two rival tides.

Both cannot govern in one soul;
Then let self-love be dispossess'd;
The love of God deserves the whole,
And will not dwell with so despised a guest.

SELF-DIFFIDENCE.

Source of love, and light of day,
Tear me from myself away;
Every view and thought of mine
Cast into the mould of thine;
Teach, O teach this faithless heart
A consistent constant part;
Or, if it must live to grow
More rebellious, break it now!

Is it thus that I requite
Grace and goodness infinite?
Every trace of every boon
Cancell'd and erased so soon!
Can I grieve thee whom I love;
Thee in whom I live and move?
If my sorrow touch thee still,
Save me from so great an ill!

Oh! the oppressive, irksome weight,
Felt in an uncertain state;
Comfort, peace, and rest, adieu,
Should I prove at last untrue!
Still I choose thee, follow still
Every notice of thy will;
But unstable, strangely weak,
Still let slip the good I seek.

Self-confiding wretch, I thought
I could serve thee as I ought,
Win thee, and deserve to feel
All the love thou canst reveal;
Trusting self, a bruised reed,
Is to be deceived indeed:
Save me from this harm and loss,
Lest my gold turn all to dross?

Self is earthly—faith alone
Makes an unseen world our own;
Faith relinquish'd, how we roam,
Feel our way, and leave our home!
Spurious gems our hopes entice,
While we scorn the pearl of price;
And, preferring servants' pay,
Cast the children's bread away.

THE ACQUIESCENCE OF PURE LOVE.

Love! if thy destined sacrifice am I,
Come, slay thy victim, and prepare thy fires;
Plunged in thy depths of mercy, let me die
The death which every soul that lives desires!

I watch my hours and see them fleet away;
The time is long that I have languish'd here;
Yet all my thoughts thy purposes obey,
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees.

One good she covets, and that good alone,
To choose thy will, from selfish bias free;
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee.

That we should bear the cross is thy command,
Die to the world, and live to self no more;
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwreck'd as when safe on shore.

REPOSE IN GOD.

Blest! who, far from all mankind,
This world's shadows left behind,
Hears from heaven a gentle strain
Whispering love, and loves again.

Blest! who, free from self-esteem,
Dives into the great Supreme,
All desire beside discards,
Joys inferior none regards.

Blest! who in thy bosom seeks
Rest that nothing earthly breaks,
Dead to self and worldly things,
Lost in thee thou King of kings!

Ye that know my secret fire,
Softly speak and soon retire;
Favor my divine repose,
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

Oh loved! but not enough—though dearer far
Than self and its most loved enjoyments are;
None duly loves thee, but who, nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in thee.

Glory of God! thou stranger here below,
Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know;
Our faith and reason are both shock'd to find
Man in the post of honor—Thee behind.

Reason exclaims—"Let every creature fall,
Ashamed, abased, before the Lord of all;"
And faith, o'erwhelm'd with such a dazzling blaze,
Feebly describes the beauty she surveys.

Yet man, dim-sighted man, and rash as blind,
Deaf to the dictates of his better mind,
In frantic competition dares the skies,
And claims precedence of the Only-wise.

Oh lost in vanity, till once self-known!
Nothing is great, or good, but God alone;
When thou shalt stand before his awful face,
Then, at the last, thy pride shall know his place.

Glorious, Almighty, First, and without end!
When wilt thou melt the mountains and descend?
When wilt thou shoot abroad thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms, thou hast made, thy praise?

Thy glory is the sweetest heaven I feel;
And if I seek it with too fierce a zeal,
Thy love, triumphant o'er a selfish will,
Taught me the passion, and inspires it still.

My reason, all my faculties, unite,
To make thy glory their supreme delight;
Forbid it, fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob thee, and usurp thy praise!

My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteem'd or great;
To take the impression of a will divine,
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess him righteous in his just decrees,
Love what he loves, and let his pleasure please;
Die daily; from the touch of sin recede;
Then thou hast crown'd him, and he reigns indeed.

SELF-LOVE AND TRUTH INCOMPATIBLE.

From thorny wilds a monster came,
That fill'd my soul with fear and shame
The birds, forgetful of their mirth;
Droop'd at the sight, and fell to earth;
When thus a sage address'd mine ear,
Himself unconscious of a fear:
"Whence all this terror and surprise,
Distracted looks and streaming eyes?
Far from the world and its affairs,
The joy it boasts, the pain it shares,
Surrender, without guile or art,
To God an undivided heart;
The savage form, so fear'd before,
Shall scare your trembling soul no more;
For, loathsome as the sight may be,
'Tis but the love of self you see.
Fix all your love on God alone,
Choose but his will, and hate your own:
No fear shall in your path be found,
The dreary waste shall bloom around,
And you, through all your happy days,
Shall bless his name, and sing his praise."
Oh lovely solitude, how sweet
The silence of this calm retreat!
Here Truth, the fair whom I pursue,
Gives all her beauty to my view;
The simple, unadorn'd display
Charms every pain and fear away.
O Truth, whom millions proudly slight;
O Truth, my treasure and delight;
Accept this tribute to thy name,
And this poor heart from which it came!

THE LOVE OF GOD, THE END OF LIFE

Since life in sorrow must be spent,
So be it—I am well content,

And meekly wait my last remove,
Seeking only growth in love.

No bliss I seek, but to fulfil
In life, in death, thy lovely will;
No succors in my woes I want,
Save what thou art pleased to grant.

Our days are number'd, let us spare
Our anxious hearts a needless care:
'Tis thine to number out our days;
Ours to give them to thy praise.

Love is our only business here,
Love, simple, constant, and sincere;
O blessed days thy servants see,
Spent, O Lord! in pleasing thee!

LOVE FAITHFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BELOVED.

In vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise;
Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow,
Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now;
Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me.

In vain he leaves me, I shall love him still;
And though I mourn, not murmur at his will;
I have no cause—an object all divine,
Might well grow weary of a soul like mine;
Yet pity me great God! forlorn, alone,
Heartless and hopeless, life and love all gone.

LOVE PURE AND FERVENT.

Jealous, and with love o'erflowing,
God demands a fervent heart;
Grace and bounty still bestowing,
Calls us to a grateful part.

Oh, then, with supreme affection
His paternal will regard!
If it cost us some dejection,
Every sigh has its reward.

Perfect love has power to soften
Cares that might our peace destroy,
Nay, does more—transforms them often,
Changing sorrow into joy.

Sovereign love appoints the measure,
And the number of our pains;
And is pleased when we find pleasure
In the trials he ordains.

THE ENTIRE SURRENDER.

Peace has unveil'd her smiling face,
And wooes thy soul to her embrace,
Enjoy'd with ease, if thou refrain
From earthly love, else sought in vain;
She dwells with all who truth prefer,
But seeks not them who seek not her.

Yield to the Lord with simple heart,
All that thou hast, and all thou art;
Renounce all strength but strength divine;
And peace shall be forever thine:
Behold the path which I have trod,
My path, till I go home to God.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.

I place an offering at thy shrine,
From taint and blemish clear,
Simple and pure in its design,
Of all that I hold dear.

I yield thee back thy gifts again,
Thy gifts which most I prize;
Desirous only to retain
The notice of thine eyes.

But if, by thine adored decree,
That blessing be denied;
Resign'd, and unreluctant, see
My every wish subside.

Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down;
Thy will in every state I love,
And even in thy frown.

GOD HIDES HIS PEOPLE.

To lay the soul that loves him low,
Becomes the Only-wise;
To hide beneath a veil of woe,
The children of the skies.

Man, though a worm, would yet be great;
Though feeble, would seem strong;
Assumes an independent state,
By sacrilege and wrong.

Strange the reverse, which, once abased,
The haughty creature proves!
He feels his soul a barren waste,
Nor dares affirm he loves.

Scorn'd by the thoughtless and the vain,
To God he presses near;
Superior to the world's disdain,
And happy in its sneer.

Oh welcome, in his heart he says,
Humility and shame!
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name!

But will not scandal mar the good
That I might else perform?
And can God work it, if he would,
By so despised a worm?

Ah, vainly anxious!—leave the Lord
To rule thee, and dispose;
Sweet is the mandate of his word,
And gracious all he does.

He draws from human littleness
His grandeur and renown;
And generous hearts with joy confess
The triumph all his own.

Down then with self-exalting thoughts;
Thy faith and hope employ,

To welcome all that he allots,
And suffer shame with joy.

No longer, then, thou wilt encroach
On his eternal right;
And he shall smile at thy approach,
And make thee his delight.

THE SECRETS OF DIVINE LOVE ARE TO BE KEPT.

Sun! stay thy course, this moment stay—
Suspend the o'erflowing tide of day,
Divulge not such a love as mine,
Ah! hide the mystery divine;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame.

O night! propitious to my views,
Thy sable awning wide diffuse;
Conceal alike my joy and pain,
Nor draw thy curtain back again,
Though morning, by the tears she shows,
Seems to participate my woes.

Ye stars! whose faint and feeble fires
Express my languishing desires,
Whose slender beams pervade the skies,
As silent as my secret sighs,
Those emanations of a soul,
That darts her fires beyond the Pole;

Your rays, that scarce assist the sight,
That pierce, but not displace the night,
That shine indeed, but nothing show
Of all those various scenes below,
Bring no disturbance, rather prove
Incentives to a sacred love.

Thou moon! whose never-failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,
Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To Him who calls the stars by name;
Whose absence kills, whose presence cheers;
Who blots, or brightens, all my years.

While, in the blue abyss of space,
Thine orb performs its rapid race;
Still whisper in his listening ears
The language of my sighs and tears;
Tell him, I seek him, far below,
Lost in a wilderness of woe.

Ye thought-composing, silent hours,
Diffusing peace o'er all my powers;
Friends of the pensive, who conceal,
In darkest shades, the flames I feel;
To you I trust, and safely may,
The love that wastes my strength away.

In sylvan scenes and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude;
Retired indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a spouse unknown,
Who hides me here from envious eyes,
From all intrusion and surprise.

Imbowering shades and dens profound!
Where echo rolls the voice around;
Mountains! whose elevated heads
A moist and misty veil o'erspreads;
Disclose a solitary bride
To him I love—to none beside.

Ye rills, that, murmuring all the way,
Among the polish'd pebbles stray;
Creep silently along the ground,
Lest, drawn by that harmonious sound,
Some wanderer, whom I would not meet,
Should stumble on my loved retreat.

Enamell'd meads, and hillocks green,
And streams that water all the scene,
Ye torrents, loud in distant ears,
Ye fountains, that receive my tears,
Ah! still conceal, with caution due,
A charge I trust to none but you!

If, when my pain and grief increase
I seem to enjoy the sweetest peace,
It is because I find so fair
The charming object of my care,
That I can sport and pleasure make
Of torment suffer'd for his sake.

Ye meads and groves, unconscious things!
Ye know not whence my pleasure springs;
Ye know not, and ye cannot know,
The source from which my sorrows flow:
The dear sole cause of all I feel,—
He knows, and understands them well.

Ye deserts, where the wild beasts rove,
Scenes sacred to my hours of love;
Ye forests, in whose shades I stray,
Benighted under burning day;
Ah! whisper not how blest am I,
Nor while I live, nor when I die.

Ye lambs, who sport beneath these shades,
And bound along the mossy glades;
Be taught a salutary fear,
And cease to bleat when I am near;
The wolf may hear your harmless cry,
Whom ye should dread as much as I.

How calm, amid these scenes, my mind!
How perfect is the peace I find!
Oh hush, be still, my every part,
My tongue, my pulse, my beating heart!
That love, aspiring to its cause,
May suffer not a moment's pause.

Ye swift-finn'd nations, that abide
In seas, as fathomless as wide;
And, unsuspicious of a snare,
Pursue at large your pleasures there;
Poor sportive fools! how soon does man
Your heedless ignorance trepan.

Away! dive deep into the brine,
Where never yet sunk plummet line;
Trust me, the vast leviathan
Is merciful compared with man;
Avoid his arts, forsake the beach,
And never play within his reach.

My soul her bondage ill endures
I pant for liberty like yours;
I long for that immense profound,
That knows no bottom and no bound;
Lost in infinity, to prove
The incomprehensible of love.

Ye birds, that lessen as ye fly,
And vanish in the distant sky;
To whom yon airy waste belongs,
Resounding with your cheerful songs;
Haste to escape from human sight;
Fear less the vulture and the kite.

How blest and how secure am I,
When quitting earth, I soar on high;
When lost, like you I disappear,
And float in a sublimer sphere;
Whence falling, within human view,
I am ensnared, and caught like you!

Omniscient God, whose notice deigns
To try the heart and search the reins,
Compassionate the numerous woes,
I dare not, e'en to thee, disclose;
Oh save me from the cruel hands
Of men, who fear not thy commands!

Love, all-subduing and divine,
Care for a creature truely thine;
Reign in a heart, disposed to own
No sovereign but thyself alone;
Cherish a bride who cannot rove,
Nor quit thee for a meaner love!

THE VICISSITUDES EXPERIENCED IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I SUFFER fruitless anguish day by day,
Each moment, as it passes, marks my pain;
Scarce knowing whither, doubtfully I stray,
And see no end of all that I sustain.

The more I strive the more I am withstood;
Anxiety increasing every hour,
My spirit finds no rest, performs no good,
And nought remains of all my former power.

My peace of heart is fled, I know not where;
My happy hours, like shadows, pass'd away;
Their sweet remembrance doubles all my care,
Night darker seems, succeeding such a day.

Dear faded joys and impotent regret,
What profit is there in incessant tears?
Oh thou, whom, once beheld, we ne'er forget
Reveal thy love, and banish all my fears!

Alas he flies me—treats me as his foe,
Views not my sorrows, hears not when I plead;
Woe such as mine, despised, neglected woe,
Unless it shortens life, is vain indeed.

Pierced with a thousand wounds, I yet survive;
My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires;
And while in terrors of thy wrath I live,
Hell seems to loose its less tremendous fires.

Has hell a pain I would not gladly bear,
So thy severe displeasure might subside?
Hopeless of ease, I seem already there,
My life extinguish'd, and yet death denied.

Is this the joy so promised—this the love,
The unchanging love, so sworn in better days?
Ah! dangerous glories! shown me, but to prove
How lovely thou, and I how rash to gaze.

Why did I see them? had I still remain'd
Untaught, still ignorant how fair thou art,
My humbler wishes I had still obtain'd,
Nor known the torments of a doubting heart.

Deprived of all, yet feeling no desires,
Whence then, I cry, the pangs that I sustain?
Dubious and uninform'd, my soul inquires,
Ought she to cherish or shake off her pain?

Suffering, I suffer not—sincerely love,
Yet feel no touch of that enlivening flame;
As chance inclines me, unconcern'd I move,
All times, and all events, to me the same.

I search my heart, and not a wish is there
But burns with zeal that hated self may fall;
Such is the sad disquietude I share,
A sea of doubts, and self the source of all.

I ask not life, nor do I wish to die;
And, if thine hand accomplish not my cure,
I would not purchase with a single sigh
A free discharge from all that I endure.

I groan in chains, yet want not a release;
Am sick, and know not the distemper'd part;
Am just as void of purpose as of peace;
Have neither plan, nor fear, nor hope, nor heart.

My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me, or without me, shows;
Once I had faith, but now in self-despair
Find my chief cordial and my best repose.

My soul is a forgotten thing; she sinks,
Sinks and is lost, without a wish to rise;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased forever from the skies.

Language affords not my distress a name,—
Yet it is real and no sickly dream;
'Tis love inflicts it; though to feel that flame
Is all I know of happiness supreme.

When love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as hell, is open'd in the soul;
When love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears control.

Then tell me why these ages of delay?
Oh love, all excellent, once more appear:
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear!

No—love is angry, will not now endure
A sigh of mine, or suffer a complaint;
He smites me, wounds me, and withholds the cure;
Exhausts my powers, and leaves me sick and faint.

He wounds, and hides the hand that gave the blow;
He flies, he re-appears, and wounds again—
Was ever heart that loved thee treated so?
Yet I adore thee, though it seem in vain.

And wilt thou leave me, whom, when lost and blind,
Thou didst distinguish and vouchsafe to choose,
Before thy laws were written in my mind,
While yet the world had all my thoughts and views?

Now leave me, when, enamor'd of thy laws,
I make thy glory my supreme delight?
Now blot me from thy register, and cause
A faithful soul to perish from thy sight?

What can have caused the change which I deplore?
Is it to prove me, if my heart be true?
Permit me then, while prostrate I adore,
To draw, and place its picture in thy view.

'Tis thine without reserve, most simply thine;
So given to thee, that it is not my own;

A willing captive of thy grace divine;
And loves, and seeks thee, for thyself alone.

Pain cannot move it, danger cannot scare;
Pleasure and wealth, in its esteem, are dust;
It loves thee, e'en when least inclined to spare
Its tenderest feelings, and avows thee just.

'Tis all thine own; my spirit is so too,
An undivided offering at thy shrine;
It seeks thy glory with no double view,
Thy glory with no secret bent to mine.

Love, holy love! and art thou not severe,
To slight me, thus devoted, and thus fix'd?
Mine is an everlasting ardor, clear
From all self-bias, generous and unmix'd.

But I am silent, seeing what I see—
And fear with cause, that I am self-deceived;
Not e'en my faith is from suspicion free,
And that I love seems not to be believed.

Live thou, and reign forever, glorious Lord!
My last, least offering I present thee now—
Renounce me, leave me, and be still adored!
Slay me, my God, and I applaud the blow.

WATCHING UNTO GOD IN THE NIGHT SEASON.

Sleep at last has fled these eyes,
Nor do I regret his flight,
More alert my spirits rise,
And my heart is free and light.

Nature silent all around,
Not a single witness near;
God as soon as sought is found,
And the flame of love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,
Checks the current of my joys;
Creatures press me with a throng,
And perplex me with their noise.

Undisturb'd I muse all night,
On the first Eternal Fair;
Nothing there obstructs delight,
Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,
Proves a foe to love and me;
Fresh entanglements occur—
Comes the night and sets me free.

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend
My enjoyments, always new:
Leave me to possess my friend;
Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world that I may wake
To the taste of pure delights;
Oh the pleasures I partake—
God, the partner of my nights!

David, for the selfsame cause,
Night preferr'd to busy day;
Hearts whom heavenly beauty draws,
Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers is for you—
Souls that love celestial know
Fairer scenes by night can view
Than the sun could ever show.

ON THE SAME.

Season of my purest pleasure,
Sealer of observing eyes!
When in larger, freer measure,
I can commune with the skies;
While, beneath thy shade extended,
Weary man forgets his woes,
I, my daily trouble ended,
Find, in watching, my repose.

Silence all around prevailing,
Nature hush'd in slumber sweet,
No rude noise mine ears assailing,
Now my God and I can meet:
Universal nature slumbers,
And my soul partakes the calm,
Breathes her ardor out in numbers,
Plaintive song or lofty psalm.

Now my passion, pure and holy,
Shines and burns without restraint:
Which the day's fatigue and folly
Cause to languish, dim and faint:
Charming hours of relaxation!
How I dread the ascending sun!
Surely, idle conversation
Is an evil match'd by none.

Worldly prate and babble hurt me;
Unintelligible prove;
Neither teach me nor divert me;
I have ears for none but love.
Me they rude esteem, and foolish,
Hearing my absurd replies;
I have neither art's fine polish,
Nor the knowledge of the wise.

Simple souls and unpolluted
By conversing with the great,
Have a mind and taste ill suited
To their dignity and state;
All their talking, reading, writing,
Are but talents misapplied;
Infants' prattle I delight in,
Nothing human choose beside.

'Tis the secret fear of sinning
Checks my tongue, or I should say,
When I see the night beginning,
I am glad of parting day:
Love this gentle admonition
Whispers soft within my breast:
"Choice befits not thy condition,
Acquiescence suits thee best."

Henceforth, the repose and pleasure
Night affords me I resign;
And thy will shall be the measure,
Wisdom infinite! of mine:
Wishing is but inclination
Quarrelling with thy decrees;
Wayward nature finds the occasion—
'Tis her folly and disease.

Night, with its sublime enjoyments
Now no longer will I choose;
Nor the day, with its employments,
Irksome as they seem, refuse;
Lessons of a God's inspiring
Neither time nor place impedes;
From our wishing and desiring
Our unhappiness proceeds.

ON THE SAME.

Night! how I love thy silent shades,
My spirits they compose;
The bliss of heaven my soul pervades,
In spite of all my woes.

While sleep instils her poppy dews
In every slumbering eye,
I watch to meditate and muse,
In blest tranquillity.

And when I feel a God immense
Familiarly impart,
With every proof he can dispense
His favor to my heart.

My native meanness I lament,
Though most divinely fill'd
With all the ineffable content
That Deity can yield.

His purpose and his course he keeps;
Treads all my reasonings down;
Commands me out of nature's deeps,
And hides me in his own.

When in the dust, its proper place,
Our pride of heart we lay:
'Tis then a deluge of his grace
Bears all our sins away.

Thou whom I serve, and whose I am,
Whose influence from on high
Refines, and still refines my flame,
And makes my fetters fly.

How wretched is the creature's state
Who thwarts thy gracious power;
Crush'd under sin's enormous weight,
Increasing every hour!

The night, when pass'd entire with thee,
How luminous and clear!
Then sleep has no delights for me,
Lest thou shouldst disappear.

My Saviour! occupy me still
In this secure recess;
Let reason slumber if she will,
My joy shall not be less.

Let reason slumber out the night;
But if thou deign to make
My soul the abode of truth and light,
Ah, keep my heart awake!

THE JOY OF THE CROSS.

Long plunged in sorrow, I resign
My soul to that dear hand of thine,
Without reserve or fear;
That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes;
Or into smiles of glad surprise
Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is thy love;
In earth beneath, or heaven above,
I have no other store;
And, though with fervent suit I pray,
And importune thee night and day,
I ask thee nothing more.

My rapid hours pursue the course
Prescribed them by love's sweetest force,
And I thy sovereign will,
Without a wish to escape my doom;
Though still a sufferer from the womb,
And doom'd to suffer still.

By thy command, where'er I stray,
Sorrow attends me all my way,
A never-failing friend;
And, if my sufferings may augment
Thy praise, behold me well content—
Let sorrow still attend!

It cost me no regret, that she,
Who follow'd Christ, should follow me,
And though, where'er she goes,
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
I love her, and extract a sweet
From all my bitter woes.

Adieu! ye vain delights of earth,
Insipid sports, and childish mirth,
I taste no sweets in you;
Unknown delights are in the cross,
All joy beside to me is dross;
And Jesus thought so too.

The cross! Oh ravishment and bliss—
How grateful e'en its anguish is;
Its bitterness how sweet!
There every sense, and all the mind,
In all her faculties refined,
Tastes happiness complete.

Souls once enabled to disdain
Base sublunary joys, maintain
Their dignity secure;
The fever of desire is pass'd,
And love has all its genuine taste,
Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,
Consults her own peculiar ease;
'Tis all the bliss she knows;
But nobler aims true Love employ;
In self-denial is her joy,
In suffering her repose.

Sorrow and love go side by side;
Nor height nor depth can e'er divide
Their heaven-appointed bands;
Those dear associates still are one,
Nor till the race of life is run
Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,
Thou faithful lover, above all
The cross has ever borne!
Oh tell me,—life is in thy voice—
How much afflictions were thy choice,
And sloth and ease thy scorn!

Thy choice and mine shall be the same
Inspirer of that holy flame,
Which must forever blaze!
To take the cross and follow thee,
Where love and duty lead, shall be
My portion and my praise.

JOY IN MARTYRDOM.

Sweet tenants of this grove!
Who sing without design,

A song of artless love,
In unison with mine:
These echoing shades return
Full many a note of ours,
That wise ones cannot learn,
With all their boasted powers.

O thou! whose sacred charms
These hearts so seldom love,
Although thy beauty warms
And blesses all above;
How slow are human things,
To choose their happiest lot!
All-glorious King of kings,
Say why we love thee not?

This heart, that cannot rest,
Shall thine forever prove;
Though bleeding and distress'd,
Yet joyful in thy love:
'Tis happy though it breaks
Beneath thy chastening hand;
And speechless, yet it speaks,
What thou canst understand.

SIMPLE TRUST.

Still, still, without ceasing,
I feel it increasing,
This fervor of holy desire;
And often exclaim,
Let me die in the flame
Of a love that can never expire!

Had I words to explain
What she must sustain
Who dies to the world and its ways;
How joy and affright,
Distress and delight,
Alternately chequer her days:

Thou, sweetly severe!
I would make thee appear,
In all thou art pleased to award,
Not more in the sweet
Than the bitter I meet
My tender and merciful Lord.

This faith, in the dark,
Pursuing its mark,
Through many sharp trials of love,
Is the sorrowful waste
That is to be pass'd
On the way to the Canaan above.

THE NECESSITY OF SELF-ABASEMENT.

Source of love, my brighter sun,
Thou alone my comfort art;
See, my race is almost run:
Hast thou left this trembling heart?

In my youth thy charming eyes
Drew me from the ways of men;
Then I drank unmingled joys;
Frown of thine saw never then.

Spouse of Christ was then my name;
And, devoted all to thee,
Strangely jealous I became,
Jealous of this self in me.

Thee to love, and none beside,
Was my darling, sole employ;
While alternately I died,
Now of grief, and now of joy.

Through the dark and silent night
On thy radiant smiles I dwelt;
And to see the dawning light
Was the keenest pain I felt.

Thou my gracious teacher wert;
And thine eye, so close applied,
While it watch'd thy pupil's heart,
Seem'd to look at none beside.

Conscious of no evil drift,
This, I cried, is love indeed—
'Tis the giver, not the gift,
Whence the joys I feel proceed.

But, soon humbled and laid low,
Stript of all thou hadst conferr'd,
Nothing left but sin and woe,
I perceived how I had err'd.

Oh, the vain conceit of man,
Dreaming of a good his own,
Arrogating all he can,
Though the Lord is good alone!

He the graces thou hast wrought
Makes subservient to his pride;
Ignorant that one such thought
Passes all his sin beside.

Such his folly—proved, at last
By the loss of that repose,
Self-complacence cannot taste,
Only love divine bestows.

'Tis by this reproof severe,
And by this reproof alone,
His defects at last appear,
Man is to himself made known.

Learn, all earth! that feeble man,
Sprung from this terrestrial clod,
Nothing is, and nothing can;
Life and power are all in God.

LOVE INCREASED BY SUFFERING.

"I love the Lord," is still the strain
This heart delights to sing:
But I reply—your thoughts are vain,
Perhaps 'tis no such thing.

Before the power of love divine
Creation fades away;
Till only God is seen to shine
In all that we survey.

In gulfs of awful night we find
The God of our desires;
'Tis there he stamps the yielding mind,
And doubles all its fires.

Flames of encircling love invest,
And pierce it sweetly through;
'Tis filled with sacred joy, yet press'd
With sacred sorrow too.

Ah love! my heart is in the right—
Amidst a thousand woes,

To thee, its ever new delight,
  And all its peace it owes.

Fresh causes of distress occur
  Where'er I look or move;
The comforts I to all prefer
  Are solitude and love.

Nor exile I nor prison fear;
  Love makes my courage great;
I find a Saviour everywhere,
  His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,
  Exclude his quickening beams;
There I can sit, and sing, and weep,
  And dwell on heavenly themes.

There sorrow, for his sake, is found
  A joy beyond compare;
There no presumptuous thoughts abound,
  No pride can enter there.

A Saviour doubles all my joys,
  And sweetens all my pains,
His strength in my defence employs,
  Consoles me and sustains.

I fear no ill, resent no wrong;
  Nor feel a passion move,
When malice whets her slanderous tongue;
  Such patience is in love.

SCENES FAVORABLE TO MEDITATION.

Wilds horrid and dark with o'ershadowing trees,
  Rocks that ivy and briers infold,
Scenes nature with dread and astonishment sees,
  But I with a pleasure untold;

Though awfully silent, and shaggy, and rude,
  I am charm'd with the peace ye afford;
Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,
  The abode of my lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendor, O fountain of day,
  And here I am hid from its beams,
Here safely contemplate a brighter display
  Of the noblest and holiest of themes.

Ye forests, that yield me my sweetest repose,
  Where stillness and solitude reign,
To you I securely and boldly disclose
  The dear anguish of which I complain.

Here, sweetly forgetting and wholly forgot
  By the world and its turbulent throng,
The birds and the streams lend me many a note
  That aids meditation and song.

Here, wandering in scenes that are sacred to night,
  Love wears me and wastes me away,
And often the sun has spent much of his light
  Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelops the sphere
  My sorrows are sadly rehearsed,
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,
  And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the deserts agree,
  Mankind are the wolves that I fear,
They grudge me my natural right to be free,
  But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode
  That appetite wishes to find,
My spirit is soothed by the presence of God,
  And appetite wholly resign'd.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led,
  My life I in praises employ,
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed
  Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There's nothing I seem to have skill to discern,
  I feel out my way in the dark,
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn,
  Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem to myself to be dead,
  Such a riddle is not to be found,
I am nourish'd without knowing how I am fed,
  I have nothing, and yet I abound.

Oh love! who in darkness art pleased to abide,
  Though dimly, yet surely I see
That these contrarieties only reside
  In the soul that is chosen of thee.

Ah! send me not back to the race of mankind,
  Perversely by folly beguiled,
For where, in the crowds I have left, shall I find
  The spirit and heart of a child?

Here let me, though fix'd in a desert, be free;
  A little one whom they despise,
Though lost to the world, if in union with thee,
  Shall be holy, and happy, and wise.

TRANSLATIONS

OF THE

LATIN AND ITALIAN POEMS OF MILTON.

ELEGY I.

TO CHARLES DEODATI.

At length, my friend, the far-sent letters come,
Charged with thy kindness, to their destined home;
They come, at length, from Deva's Western side,
Where prone she seeks the salt Vergivian tide.
Trust me, my joy is great that thou shouldst be,
Though born of foreign race, yet born for me,
And that my sprightly friend, now free to roam,
Must seek again so soon his wonted home,
I well content, where Thames with influent tide
My native city laves, meantime reside,
Nor zeal nor duty now my steps impel
To reedy Cam, and my forbidden cell.
Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
That to the musing bard all shade deny.
'Tis time that I a pedant's threats disdain,
And fly from wrongs my soul will ne'er sustain.
If peaceful days, in letter'd leisure spent
Beneath my father's roof be banishment,
Then call me banish'd, I will ne'er refuse
A name expressive of the lot I choose.
I would that, exiled to the Pontic shore,
Rome's hapless bard had suffer'd nothing more.
He then had equall'd even Homer's lays,
And, Virgil! thou hadst won but second praise:
For here I woo the muse, with no control,
And here my books—my life—absorb me whole.
Here too I visit, or to smile or weep,
The winding theatre's majestic sweep;
The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits, spent in learning's long pursuits;
Whether some senior shrewd, or spendthrift heir,
Suitor, or soldier, now unarm'd, be there,
Or some coif'd brooder o'er a ten years' cause,
Thunder the Norman gibberish of the laws.
The lacquey, there, oft dupes the wary sire,
And, artful, speeds the enamor'd son's desire.
There, virgins oft, unconscious what they prove,
What love is know not yet, unknowing, love.
Or, if impassion'd tragedy wield high
The bloody sceptre, give her locks to fly,
Wild as the winds, and roll her haggard eye,
I gaze, and grieve, still cherishing my grief.
At times, e'en bitter tears yield sweet relief,
As, when from bliss untasted torn away,
Some youth dies, hapless on his bridal day;
Or when the ghost sent back from shades below,
Fills the assassin's heart with vengeful woe;
When Troy, or Argos, the dire scene affords,
Or Creon's hall laments its guilty lords.
Nor always city-pent, or pent at home,
I dwell; but, when spring calls me forth to roam,
Expatiate in our proud suburban shades
Of branching elm that never sun pervades.
Here many a virgin troop I may descry,
Like stars of mildest influence, gliding by.
Oh forms divine! oh looks that might inspire
E'en Jove himself, grown old, with young desire,
Oft have I gazed on gem-surpassing eyes,
Out-sparkling every star that gilds the skies;
Necks whiter than the ivory arm bestow'd
By Jove on Pelops, or the milky road! [low,
Bright locks, love's golden snare! these falling
Those playing wanton o'er the graceful brow!
Cheeks, too, more winning sweet than after shower
Adonis turn'd to Flora's favorite flower!
Yield, heroines, yield, and ye who shared the embrace
Of Jupiter in ancient times, give place!
Give place, ye turban'd fair of Persia's coast!
And ye, not less renown'd, Assyria's boast!
Submit, ye nymphs of Greece! ye, once the bloom
Of Ilion! and all ye, of haughty Rome,
Who swept, of old, her theatres with trains
Redundant, and still live in classic strains!
To British damsels beauty's palm is due;
Alicas! to follow them is fame for you.
Oh city, founded by Dardanian hands,
Whose towering front the circling realm commands,
Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.
The virgin multitude that daily meets,
Radiant with gold and beauty, in thy streets,
Outnumbers all her train of starry fires
With which Diana gilds thy lofty spires.
Fame says that, wafted hither by her doves,
With all her host of quiver-bearing loves,
Venus, preferring Paphian scenes no more,
Has fix'd her empire on thy nobler shore.
But, lest the sightless boy enforce my stay,
I leave these happy walls while yet I may.
Immortal Moly shall secure my heart
From all the sorcery of Circæan art,
And I will e'en repass Cam's reedy pools,
To face once more the warfare of the schools.
Meantime accept this trifle! rhymes though few,
Yet such as prove thy friend's remembrance true!

ELEGY II.

ON THE DEATH OF THE UNIVERSITY BEADLE AT CAMBRIDGE.

THEE, whose refulgent staff and summons clear
Minerva's flock long time was wont to obey,
Although thyself a herald, famous here,
The last of heralds, death, has snatch'd away.
He calls on all alike, nor even deigns
To spare the office that himself sustains.

Thy locks were whiter than the plumes display'd
By Leda's paramour in ancient time;
But thou wast worthy ne'er to have decay'd,
Or, Æson-like, to know a second prime,
Worthy, for whom some goddess should have won
New life, oft kneeling to Apollo's son.

Commission'd to convene with hasty call [stand!
The gowned tribes, how graceful wouldst thou
So stood Cyllenius erst in Priam's hall,
Wing-footed messenger of Jove's command!
And so Euryhates, when he address'd
To Peleus' son Atrides' proud behest.

Dread queen of sepulchres! whose rigorous laws
And watchful eyes run through the realms
Oh, oft too adverse to Minerva's cause! [below,
Too often to the muse not less a foe!
Choose meaner marks, and with more equal aim
Pierce useless drones, earth's burden and its shame!

Flow, therefore, tears for him from every eye,
All ye disciples of the muses, weep!
Assembling all in robes of sable dye,
Around his bier lament his endless sleep!
And let complaining Elegy rehearse
In every school her sweetest, saddest verse.

ELEGY III.

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

SILENT I sat, dejected and alone,
Making, in thought, the public woes my own,
When first arose the image in my breast
Of England's suffering by that scourge, the pest!
How Death, his funeral torch and scythe in hand,
Entering the lordliest mansions of the land,
Has laid the gem-illumined palace low,
And levell'd tribes of nobles at a blow.
I next deplored the famed paternal pair,
Too soon to ashes turn'd and empty air!
The heroes next, whom snatch'd into the skies,
All Belgia saw, and follow'd with her sighs;
But thee far most I mourn'd, regretted most,
Winton's chief shepherd, and her worthiest boast!
Pour'd out in tears I thus complaining said:
"Death, next in power to Him who rules the dead!
Is it not enough that all the woodlands yield
To thy fell force, and every verdant field;
That lilies, at one noisome blast of thine,
And e'en the Cyprian queen's own roses pine;
That oaks themselves, although the running rill
Suckle their roots, must wither at thy will;
That all the winged nations, even those
Whose heaven-directed flight the future shows,
And all the beasts that in dark forests stray,
And all the herds of Proteus are thy prey.
Ah envious! arm'd with powers so unconfined!
Why stain thy hands with blood of human kind!
Why take delight, with darts that never roam,
To chase a heaven-born spirit from her home?"
While thus I mourn'd, the star of evening stood,
Now newly risen above the western flood,
And Phœbus from his morning goal again
Had reach'd the gulfs of the Iberian main.
I wish'd repose, and, on my couch reclined,
Took early rest, to night and sleep resign'd:
When—oh for words to paint what I beheld!
I seem'd to wander in a spacious field,
Where all the champaign glow'd with purple light,
Like that of sunrise on the mountain height;
Flowers over all the field, of every hue
That ever Iris wore, luxuriant grew.
Nor Chloris, with whom amorous Zephyrs play,
E'er dress'd Alcinous' garden half so gay.
A silver current, like the Tagus, roll'd
O'er golden sands, but sands of purer gold;
With dewy airs Favonius fann'd the flowers,
With airs awaken'd under rosy bowers.
Such, poet's feign, irradiated all o'er
The sun's abode on India's utmost shore.
While I that splendor, and the mingled shade
Of fruitful vines, with wonder fix'd, survey'd,
At once, with looks that beam'd celestial grace,
The seer of Winton stood before my face.
His snowy vesture's hem descending low,
His golden sandals swept, and, pure as snow
New fallen, shone the mitre on his brow.
Where'er he trod, a tremulous sweet sound
Of gladness shook the flowery scene around:
Attendant angels clap their starry wings,
The trumpet shakes the sky, all ether rings;
Each chants his welcome, folds him to his breast,
And thus a sweeter voice than all the rest:
"Ascend, my son! thy Father's kingdom share!
My son! henceforth be freed from every care!"
So spake the voice, and at its tender close
With psaltery's sound the angelic band arose;
Then night retired, and, chased by dawning day,
The visionary bliss pass'd all away.
I mourn'd my banish'd sleep with fond concern;
Frequent to me may dreams like this return!

ELEGY IV.

TO HIS TUTOR, THOMAS YOUNG,

CHAPLAIN TO THE ENGLISH FACTORY AT HAMBURGH.

HENCE, my epistle—skim the deep—fly o'er
Yon smooth expanse to the Tuetonic shore!
Haste—lest a friend should grieve for thy delay—
And the gods grant that nothing thwart thy way!
I will myself invoke the king who binds
In his Sicanian echoing vault the winds,
With Doris and her nymphs, and all the throng
Of azure gods, to speed thee safe along.
But rather, to ensure thy happier haste,
Ascend Medea's chariot, if thou mayst;
Or that whence young Triptolemus of yore
Descended, welcome on the Scythian shore.

The sands that line the German coast descried,
To opulent Hamburga turn aside!
So call'd, if legendary fame be true,
From Hama, whom a club-arm'd Cimbrian slew!
There lives, deep learn'd and primitively just,
A faithful steward of his Christian trust.
My friend, and favorite inmate of my heart,
That now is forced to want its better part!
What mountains now, and seas, alas! how wide!
From me this other, dearer self divide.
Dear as the sage renown'd for moral truth
To the prime spirit of the Attic youth!
Dear as the Stagyrite to Ammon's son,
His pupil, who disdain'd the world he won!
Nor so did Chiron, or so Phœnix shine
In young Achilles' eyes, as he in mine.
First led by him through sweet Aonian shade,
Each sacred haunt of Pindus I survey'd;
And, favor'd by the muse, whom I implored,
Thrice on my lip the hallow'd stream I pour'd.
But thrice the sun's resplendent chariot roll'd
To Aries, has new tinged his fleece with gold,
And Chloris twice has dress'd the meadows gay,
And twice has summer parch'd their bloom away,
Since last delighted on his looks I hung
Or my ear drank the music of his tongue:
Fly, therefore, and surpass the tempest's speed;
Aware thyself that there is urgent need!
Him, entering, thou shalt haply seated see
Beside his spouse, his infants on his knee;
Or turning, page by page, with studious look,
Some bulky father, or God's holy book;
Or ministering (which is his weightiest care)
To Christ's assembled flock their heavenly fare.
Give him, whatever his employment be,
Such gratulation as he claims from me!
And, with a downcast eye, and carriage meek,
Addressing him, forget not thus to speak:
"If compass'd round with arms thou canst attend
To verse, verse greets thee from a distant friend.
Long due, and late, I left the English shore;
But make me welcome for that cause the more!
Such from Ulysses, his chaste wife to cheer,
The slow epistle came, though late, sincere.
But wherefore this? why palliate I the deed
For which the culprit's self could hardly plead?
Self-charged, and self-condemned, his proper part
He feels neglected, with an aching heart;
But thou forgive—delinquents, who confess,
And pray forgiveness, merit anger less;
From timid foes the lion turns away,
Nor yawns upon or rends a crouching prey.
E'en pike-wielding Thracians learn to spare,
Won by soft influence of a suppliant prayer;
And heaven's dread thunderbolt arrested stands
By a cheap victim and uplifted hands
Long had he wished to write, but was withheld,
And writes at last, by love alone compell'd,
For fame, too often true, when she alarms,
Reports thy neighboring fields a scene of arms;
The city against fierce besiegers barr'd,
And all the Saxon chiefs for fight prepared.
Enyo wastes thy country wide around.
And sator ites with blood the tainted ground;
Mars rests contented in his Thrace no more,
But goads his steeds to fields of German gore,
The ever verdant olive fades and dies,
And Peace, the trumpet-hating goddess, flies,
Flies from that earth which justice long had left,
And leaves the world of its last guard bereft."
Thus horror girds thee round. Meantime alone
Thou dwell'st, and helpless, in a soil unknown;
Poor, and receiving from a foreign hand
The aid denied thee in thy native land.
Oh, ruthless country, and unfeeling more
Than thy own billow-beaten chalky shore!
Leavest thou to foreign care the worthies given
By Providence to guide thy steps to heaven?
His ministers, commissioned to proclaim
Eternal blessings in a Saviour's name!
Ah then most worthy, with a soul unfed,
In Stygian night to lie forever dead!
So once the venerable Tishbite stray'd
An exiled fugitive from shade to shade,
When, flying Ahab and his fury wife,
In lone Arabian wilds he shelter'd life;
So from Philippa wander'd forth forlorn,
Cilician Paul, with sounding scourges torn;
And Christ himself, so left, and trod no more
The thankless Gergesene's forbidden shore.
But thou take courage! strive against despair!
Quake not with dread, nor nourish anxious care!
Grim war indeed on every side appears,
And thou art menaced by a thousand spears;
Yet none shall drink thy blood, or shall offend
E'en the defenceless bosom of my friend.
For thee the Ægis of thy God shall hide,
Jehovah's self shall combat on thy side.
The same who vanquish'd under Sion's towers
At silent midnight all Assyria's powers,
The same who overthrew in ages past
Damascus' sons that laid Samaria waste!
Their king he fill'd and them with fatal fears,
By mimic sounds of clarions in their ears,
Of hoofs, and wheels, and neighings from afar,
Of clashing armor, and the din of war.
Thou, therefore, (as the most afflicted may),
Still hope, and triumph o'er thy evil day!
Look forth, expecting happier times to come,
And to enjoy, once more, thy native home!

ELEGY V.

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Time, never wandering from his annual round,
Bids zephyr breathe the spring, and thaw the ground;
Bleak winter flies, new verdure clothes the plain,
And earth assumes her transient youth again.
Dream I, or also to the spring belong
Increase of genius, and new powers of song?
Spring gives them, and, how strange soe'er it seems,
Impels me now to some harmonious themes.
Castalia's fountain, and the forked hill
By day, by night, my raptured fancy fill;
My bosom burns and heaves, I hear within
A sacred sound that prompts me to begin.
Lo! Phœbus comes, with his bright hair he blends
The radiant laurel wreath; Phœbus descends!
I mount, and undepress'd by cumbrous clay,
Through cloudy regions win my easy way;
Rapt through poetic shadowy haunts I fly:
The shrines all open to my dauntless eye,
My spirit searches all the realms of light,
And no Tartarean gulfs elude my sight.
But this ecstatic trance—this glorious storm
Of inspiration—what will it perform?

Spring claims the verse that with his influence glows,
And shall be paid with what himself bestows.
Thou, veil'd with opening foliage, lead'st the throng
Of feather'd minstrels. Philomel! in song;
Let us, in concert, to the season sing,
Civic and sylvan heralds of the spring!
With notes triumphant spring's approach declare!
To spring, ye muses, annual tribute bear!
The Orient left, and Ethiopia's plains,
The sun now northward turns his golden reins;
Night creeps not now; yet rules with gentle sway,
And drives her dusky horrors swift away;
Now less fatigued, on this etherenl plain
Boötes follows his celestial wain;
And now the radiant sentinels above,
Less numerous, watch around the courts of Jove,
For with the night, force, ambush, slaughter fly,
And no gigantic guilt alarms the sky.
Now, haply says some shepherd, while he views,
Recumbent on a rock, the reddening dews,
This night, this, surely, Phœbus miss'd the fair,
Who stops his chariot by her amorous care.
Cynthia, delighted by the morning's glow,
Speeds to the woodland, and resumes her bow;
Resigns her beams, and, glad to disappear,
Blesses his aid, who shortens her career.
Come—Phœbus cries—Aurora come—too late
Thou lingerest, slumbering, with thy wither'd mate;
Leave him, and to Hymettus' top repair!
Thy darling Cephalus expects thee there.
The goddess with a blush her love betrays,
But mounts, and, driving rapidly, obeys.
Earth now desires thee, Phœbus! and, to engage
Thy warm embrace, casts off the guise of age;
Desires thee, and deserves; for who so sweet
When her rich bosom courts thy genial heat?
Her breath imparts to every breeze that blows
Arabia's harvest and the Paphian rose.
Her lofty front she diadems around
With sacred pines, like Ops on Ida crown'd
Her dewy locks with various flowers new blown
She interweaves, various, and all her own;
For Proserpine, in such a wreath attired,
Tænarian Dis himself with love inspired.
Fear not, lest, cold and coy, the nymph refuse!
Herself, with all her sighing zephyrs, sues;
Each courts thee, fanning soft his scented wing,
And all her groves with warbled wishes ring.
Nor, unendow'd and indigent, aspires
The amorous Earth to engage thy warm desires,
But, rich in balmy drugs, assists thy claim,
Divine Physician! to that glorious name.
If splendid recompense, if gifts, can move
Desire in thee, (gifts often purchase love,)
She offers all the wealth her mountains hide,
And all that rests beneath the boundless tide.
How oft, when headlong from the heavenly steep
She sees thee playing in the western deep,
How oft she cries—"Ah Phœbus, why repair
Thy wasted force, why seek refreshment there?
Can Tethys win thee? wherefore shouldst thou lave
A face so fair in her unpleasant wave?
Come, seek my green retreats, and rather choose
To cool thy tresses in my crystal dews.
The grassy turf shall yield thee sweeter rest;
Come, lay thy evening glories on my breast,
And breathing fresh, through many a humid rose,
Soft whispering airs shall lull thee to repose!
No fears I feel like Semele to die,
Nor lest thy burning wheels approach too nigh,
For thou canst govern them, here therefore rest,
And lay thy evening glories on my breast!"
Thus breathes the wanton Earth her amorous flame,
And all her countless offspring feel the same;
For Cupid now through every region strays,
Brightening his faded fires with solar rays;
His new-strung bow sends forth a deadlier sound,
And his new-pointed shafts more deeply wound;
Nor Dian's self escapes him now untried,
Nor even Vesta at her altar-side;
His mother too repairs her beauty's wane,
And seems sprung newly from the deep again.
Exulting youths the hymeneal sing,
With Hymen's name roofs, rocks, and valleys ring;
He, new-attired, and by the season drest,
Proceeds, all fragrant, in his saffron vest.
Now many a golden-cinctured virgin roves
To taste the pleasures of the fields and groves,
All wish, and each alike, some favorite youth
Hers, in the bonds of hymeneal truth.
Now pipes the shepherd through his reeds again,
Nor Phillis wants a song that suits the strain;
With songs the seaman hails the starry sphere,
And dolphins rise from the abyss to hear;
Jove feels himself the season, sports again
With his fair spouse, and banquets all his train.
Now too the satyrs, in the dusk of eve,
Their mazy dance through flowery meadows weave,
And, neither god nor goat, but both in kind,
Silvanus, wreathed with cypress, skips behind.
The dryads leave their hollow sylvan cells
To roam the banks and solitary dells;
Pan riots now; and from his amorous chafe
Ceres and Cybele seem hardly safe,
And Faunus, all on fire to reach the prize,
In chase of some enticing oread flies;
She bounds before, but fears too swift a bound,
And hidden lies, but wishes to be found.
Our shades entice the immortals from above,
And some kind power presides o'er every grove;
And long, ye powers, o'er every grove preside,
For all is safe, and blest, where ye abide!
Return, O Jove! the age of gold restore—
Why choose to dwell where storms and thunder roar?
At least thou, Phœbus! moderate thy speed!
Let not the vernal hours too swift proceed,
Command rough winter back, nor yield the pole
Too soon to night's encroaching, long control!

ELEGY VI.

TO CHARLES DEODATI,

Who, while he spent his Christmas in the country, sent the Author a poetical epistle, in which he requested that his verses, if not so good as usual, might be excused on account of the many feasts to which his friends invited him, and which would not allow him leisure to finish them as he wished.

With no rich viands overcharged, I send [friend.
Health, which perchance you want, my pamper'd

But wherefore should thy muse tempt mine away
From what she loves, from darkness into day?
Art thou desirous to be told how well
I love thee, and in verse? verse cannot tell.
For verse has bounds, and must in measure move;
But neither bounds nor measure knows my love.
How pleasant, in thy lines described, appear
December's harmless sports and rural cheer!
French spirits kindling with cærulean fires,
And all such gambols as the time inspires!
Think not that wine against good verse offends,
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends;
Nor Phœbus blushes sometimes to be found
With ivy, rather than with laurel, crown'd.
The Nine themselves ofttimes have join'd the song
And revels of the Bacchanalian throng;
Not even Ovid could in Scythian air [there.
Sing sweetly—why?—no vine would flourish
What in brief numbers sung Anacreon's muse?
Wine, and the rose that sparkling wine bedews.
Pindar with Bacchus glows—his every line
Breathes the rich fragrance of inspiring wine,
While, with loud crash o'erturned, the chariot lies,
And brown with dust the fiery courser flies.
The Roman lyrist steep'd in wine his lays
So sweet in Glycera's and Chloe's praise.
Now too the plenteous feast and mantling bowl
Nourish the vigor of thy sprightly soul;
The flowing goblet makes thy numbers flow,
And casks not wine alone but verse bestow.
Thus Phœbus favors, and the arts attend,
Whom Bacchus and whom Ceres both befriend.
What wonder, then, thy verses are so sweet,
In which these triple powers so kindly meet!
The lute now also sounds with gold inwrought,
And, touch'd with flying fingers nicely taught,
In tapestried halls, high roof'd, the sprightly lyre
Directs the dancers of the virgin choir.
If dull repletion fright the muse away,
Sights gay as these may more invite her stay;
And, trust me, while the ivory keys resound,
Fair damsels sport, and perfume steam around,
Apollo's influence, like ethereal flame,
Shall animate, at once, thy glowing frame,
And all the muse shall rush into thy breast,
By love and music's blended powers possest.
For numerous powers light Elegy befriend,
Hear her sweet voice, and at her call attend;
Her, Bacchus, Ceres, Venus, all approve,
And, with his blushing mother, gentle Love.
Hence to such bards we grant the copious use
Of banquets and the vine's delicious juice.
But they who demigods and heroes praise,
And feats perform'd in Jove's more youthful days,
Who now the counsels of high heaven explore,
Now shades that echo the Cerberean roar,
Simply let these, like him of Samos, live,
Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give;
In beechen goblets let their beverage shine,
Cool from the crystal spring, their sober wine!
Their youth should pass in innocence secure
From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
Pure as the priest, when robed in white he stands,
The fresh lustration ready in his hands.
Thus Linus lived, and thus, as poets write,
Tiresias, wiser for his loss of sight;
Thus exiled Chalcas thus the Bard of Thrace,
Melodious tamer of the savage race;
Thus train'd by temperance, Homer led, of yore,
His chief of Ithaca from shore to shore,
Through magic Circe's monster-peopled reign,
And shoals insidious with the syren train;
And through the realms where grizzly spectres dwell,
Whose tribes he fetter'd in a gory spell;
For these are sacred bands, and from above
Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove.
Wouldst thou, (perhaps 'tis hardly worth thine ear,)
Wouldst thou be told my occupation here?
The promised King of Peace employs my pen,
The eternal covenant made for guilty men,
The new-born Deity with infant cries
Filling the sordid hovel where he lies;
The hymning angels, and the herald star,
That led the wise, who sought him from afar,
And idols on their own unhallow'd shore
Dash'd, at his birth, to be revered no more,
This theme on reeds of Albion I rehearse:
The dawn of that blest day inspired the verse;
Verse that, reserved in secret, shall attend
Thy candid voice, my critic and my friend!

ELEGY VII.

As yet a stranger to the gentle fires
That Amathusia's smiling queen inspires,
Not seldom I derided Cupid's darts,
And scorn'd his claim to rule all human hearts.
"Go, child," I said, "transfix the timorous dove!
An easy conquest suits an infant love;
Enslave the sparrow, for such prize shall be
Sufficient triumph to a chief like thee!
Why aim thy idle arms at human kind?
Thy shafts prevail not 'gainst the noble mind."
The Cyprian heard, and, kindling into ire,
(None kindles sooner) burn'd with double fire.
It was the spring, and newly risen day
Peep'd o'er the hamlets on the first of May;
My eyes, too tender for the blaze of light,
Still sought the shelter of retiring night,
When Love approach'd, in painted plumes array'd,
The insidious god his rattling darts betray'd,
Nor less his infant features, and the sly,
Sweet intimations of his threatening eye.
Such the Sigeian boy is seen above,
Filling the goblet for imperial Jove; [charms,
Such he, on whom the nymphs bestow'd their
Hylas, who perish'd in a naiad's arms.
Angry he seem'd, yet graceful in his ire,
And added threats not destitute of fire.
"My power," he said, "by others' pain alone,
'Twere best to learn; now learn it by thy own!
With those that feel my power, that power attest,
And in thy anguish be my sway confest!
I vanquish'd Phœbus, though returning vain
From his new triumph o'er the Python slain,
And, when he thinks on Daphne, even he
Will yield the prize of archery to me.
A dart less true the Parthian horseman sped,
Behind him kill'd, and conquer'd as he fled:
Less true the expert Cydonian, and less true
The youth whose shaft his latent Proeris slew.
Vanquish'd by me see huge Orion bend,
By me Alcides, and Alcides' friend.
At me should Jove himself a bolt design,
His bosom first should bleed, transfix'd by mine.
But all thy doubts this shaft will best explain,
Nor shall it reach thee with a trivial pain.

Thy muse, vain youth! shall not thy peace ensure,
Nor Phœbus' serpent yield thy wound a cure."
He spoke, and, waving a bright shaft in air,
Sought the warm bosom of the Cyprian fair.
That thus a child should bluster in my ear,
Provoked my laughter more than moved my fear.
I shunn'd not, therefore, public haunts, but stray'd
Careless in city or suburban shade,
And, passing and repassing nymphs, that moved
With grace divine, beheld where'er I roved.
Bright shone the vernal day with double blaze
As beauty gave new force to Phœbus' rays.
By no grave scruples check'd, I freely eyed
The dangerous show, rash youth my only guide,
And many a look of many a fair unknown
Met full, unable to control my own.
But one I mark'd, (then peace forsook my breast,)
One—Oh how far superior to the rest!
What lovely features! Such the Cyprian queen
Herself might wish, and Juno wish her mien.
The very nymph was she, whom, when I dared
His arrows, Love had even then prepared!
Nor was himself remote, nor unsupplied
With toreh well trimm'd and quiver at his side;
Now to her lips he clung, her eyelids now,
Then settled on her cheeks, or on her brow;
And with a thousand wounds from every part
Pierced and transpierced my undefended heart.
A fever, new to me, of fierce desire
Now seized my soul, and I was all on fire;
But she, the while, whom only I adore,
Was gone, and vanish'd, to appear no more.
In silent sadness I pursue my way;
I pause, I turn, proceed, yet wish to stay,
And while I follow her in thought, bemoan
With tears my soul's delight so quickly flown.
When Jove had hurl'd him to the Lemnian coast,
So Vulcan sorrow'd for Olympus lost,
And so Œclides, sinking into night,
From the deep gulf looked up to distant light.
Wretch that I am, what hopes for me remain,
Who cannot cease to love, yet love in vain?
O could I once, once more, behold the fair,
Speak to her, tell her of the pangs I bear;
Perhaps she is not adamant; would show,
Perhaps, some pity at my tale of woe.
Oh inauspicious flame—'tis mine to prove
A matchless instance of disastrous love.
Ah, spare me, gentle power!—If such thou be,
Let not thy deeds and nature disagree.
Spare me, and I will worship at no shrine
With vow and sacrifice, save only thine.
Now I revere thy fires, thy bow, thy darts:
Now own thee sovereign of all human hearts.
Remove! no—grant me still this raging woe!
Sweet is the wretchedness that lovers know:
But pierce hereafter (should I chance to see
One destined mine) at once both her and me.
Such were the trophies that, in earlier days,
By vanity seduced, I toil'd to raise;
Studious, yet indolent, and urged by youth,
That worst of teachers, from the ways of truth;
Till Learning taught me in his shady bower
To quit love's servile yoke, and spurn his power.
Then, on a sudden the fieree flame supprest,
A frost continual settled on my breast,
Whence Cupid fears his flame extinct to see,
And Venus dreads a Diomede in me.

EPIGRAMS.

ON THE INVENTOR OF GUNS.

Praise in old time the sage Prometheus won,
Who stole etherial radianee from the sun;
But greater he, whose bold invention strove
To emulate the fiery bolts of Jove.

[The poems on the subject of the Gunpowder Treason I have not translated, both because the matter of them is unpleasant, and because they are written with an asperity, which, however it might be warranted in Milton's day, would be extremely unseasonable now.]

TO LEONORA SINGING AT ROME.*

Another Leonora once inspired
Tasso with fatal love, to frenzy fired;
But how much happier, lived he now, were he,
Pierced with whatever pangs for love of thee!
Since could he hear that heavenly voice of thine,
With Adriana's lute of sound divine,
Fiercer than Penthens' though his eye might roll,
Or idiot apathy benumb his soul,
You still, with medicinal sounds might cheer
His senses wandering in a blind career;
And, sweetly breathing through his wounded breast, [rest.
Charm, with soul-soothing song, his thoughts to

TO THE SAME.

Naples, too credulous, ah! boast no more
The sweet-voiced syren buried on thy shore,
That, when Parthenope deceased, she gave
Her sacred dust to a Chalcidic grave,
For still she lives, but has exchanged the hoarse
Pausilipo for Tiber's placid course,
Where, idol of all Rome, she now in chains
Of magic song both gods and men detains.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS LANDLORD.

A FABLE.

A peasant to his lord paid yearly court,
Presenting pippins of so rich a sort,
That he, displeased to have a part alone,
Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
The tree, too old to travel, though before
So fruitful, wither'd, and would yield no more.
The 'squire, perceiving all his labor void,
Curs'd his own pains, so foolishly employ'd,
And, "Oh," he cried, "that I had lived content
With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant!
My avarice has expensive proved to me;
Has cost me both my pippins and my tree."

TO CHRISTINA, QUEEN OF SWEDEN, WITH CROMWELL'S PICTURE.

Christina, maiden of heroic mien!
Star of the North! of northern stars the queen!
Behold what wrinkles I have earn'd, and how
The iron casque still chafes my veteran brow,

* I have translated only two of the three poetical compliments addressed to Leonora, as they appear to me far superior to what I have omitted.

While following Fate's dark footsteps, I fulfil
The dictates of a hardy people's will.
But soften'd in thy sight my looks appear,
Not to all queens or kings alike severe.

ON THE DEATH OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, A PHYSICIAN.

Learn, ye nations of the earth,
The condition of your birth,
Now be taught your feeble state!
Know, that all must yield to fate!

If the mournful rover, Death,
Say but once,—"Resign your breath!"
Vainly of escape you dream,
You must pass the Stygian stream.

Could the stoutest overcome
Death's assault, and battle doom,
Hercules had both withstood,
Undiseased by Nessus' blood.

Ne'er had Hector press'd the plain
By a trick of Pallas slain,
Nor the chief to Jove allied
By Achilles' phantom died.

Could enchantments life prolong,
Circe, saved by magic song,
Still had lived, and equal skill
Had preserved Medea still.

Dwelt in herbs and drugs a power
To avert man's destined hour,
Learn'd Machaon should have known
Doubtless to avert his own:

Chiron had survived the smart
Of the hydra-tainted dart,
And Jove's bolt had been, with ease,
Foil'd by Asclepiades.

Thou too, sage! of whom forlorn
Helicon and Cirrha mourn,
Still hadst fill'd thy princely place,
Regent of the gowned race:

Hadst advanced to higher fame
Still thy much ennobled name,
Nor in Charon's skiff explored
The Tartarean gulf abhorr'd.

But resentful Proserpine,
Jealous of thy skill divine,
Snapping short thy vital thread,
Thee too number'd with the dead.

Wise and good! untroubled be
The green turf that covers thee!
Thence, in gay profusion grow
All the sweetest flowers that blow!

Pluto's consort bid thee rest!
Æacus pronounce thee blest!
To her home thy shade consign!
Make Elysium ever thine!

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF ELY.

My lids with grief were tumid yet,
And still my sullied cheek was wet
With briny dews profusely shed
For venerable Winton dead:

When fame, whose tales of saddest sound,
Alas! are ever truest found,
The news through all our cities spread
Of yet another mitred head
By ruthless fate to death consign'd,
Ely, the honor of his kind!
At once a storm of passion heaved
My boiling bosom, much I grieved;
But more I raged, at every breath
Devoting Death himself to death.
With less revenge did Naso teem
When hated Ibis was his theme;
With less Archilochus denied
The lovely Greek his promised bride.
But lo! while thus I execrate,
Incensed, the minister of fate,
Wondrous accents, soft, yet clear,
Wafted on the gale I hear.
"Ah, much deluded! lay aside
Thy threats and anger misapplied!
Art not afraid with sounds like these
To offend, where thou canst not appease?
Death is not (wherefore dream'st thou thus?)
The son of Night and Erebus:
Nor was of fell Erynnis born
On gulfs where Chaos rules forlorn;
But sent from God, his presence leaves,
To gather home his ripen'd sheaves,
To call encumber'd souls away
From fleshy bonds to boundless day,
(As when the winged hours excite,
And summon forth the morning light,)
And each to convoy to her place
Before the Eternal Father's face.
But not the wicked—them, severe
Yet just, from all their pleasures here
He hurries to the realms below,
Terrific realms of penal woe!
Myself no sooner heard his call,
Than, 'scaping through my prison wall,
I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
And soared, with angels, to the stars,
Like him of old, to whom 'twas given
To mount on fiery wheels to heaven.
Boötes' wagon, slow with cold,
Appall'd me not; nor to behold
The sword that vast Orion draws,
Or e'en the Scorpion's horrid claws.
Beyond the sun's bright orb I fly,
And far beneath my feet descry
Night's dread goddess, seen with awe,
Whom her winged dragons draw.
Thus, ever wondering at my speed,
Augmented still as I proceed,
I pass the planetary sphere,
The milky way—and now appear
Heaven's crystal battlements, her door
Of massy pearl, and emerald floor.
"But here I cease. For never can
The tongue of once a mortal man
In suitable description trace
The pleasures of that happy place;
Suffice it, that those joys divine
Are all, and all forever, mine!"

NATURE UNIMPAIRED BY TIME.

Ah, how the human mind wearies herself
With her own wanderings, and, involved in gloom
Impenetrable, speculates amiss!

Measuring in her folly things divine
By human; laws inscribed on adamant
By laws of man's device; and counsels fix'd
Forever, by the hours that pass and die.
How?—shall the face of nature then be ploughd
Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
On the great parent fix a sterile curse?
Shall even she confess old age, and halt,
And, palsy-smitten, shake her starry brows?
Shall foul antiquity with rust, and drought,
And famine, vex the radiant worlds above?
Shall Time's unsated maw crave and ingulf
The very heavens, that regulate his flight?
And was the sire of all able to fence
His works, and to uphold the circling worlds,
But, through improvident and heedless haste
Let slip the occasion?—so then—all is lost—
And in some future evil hour, yon arch [poles
Shall crumble, and come thundering down, the
Jar in collision, the Olympian king,
Fall with his throne, and Pallas, holding forth
The terrors of the Gorgon shield in vain,
Shall rush to the abyss, like Vulcan hurl'd
Down into Lemnos, through the gate of heaven.
Thou also, with precipitated wheels,
Phœbus! thy own son's fall shalt imitate,
With hideous ruin shalt impress the deep
Suddenly, and the flood shall reek, and hiss,
At the extinction of the lamp of day.
Then too shall Hæmus, cloven to his base,
Be shatter'd, and the huge Ceraunian hills,
Once weapons of Tartarean Dis, immersed
In Erebus, shall fill himself with fear.
No. The Almighty Father surer laid
His deep foundations, and providing well
For the event of all, the scales of fate
Suspended in just equipoise, and bade
His universal works, from age to age,
One tenor hold, perpetual, undisturb'd.
Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
Continual, day by day, and with it bears
In social measure swift, the heavens around.
Not tardier now is Saturn than of old.
Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
Phœbus, his vigor unimpair'd, still shows
The effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
A downward course, that he may warm the vales;
But, ever rich in influence, runs his road,
Sign after sign, through all the heavenly zone.
Beautiful, as at first, ascends the star
From odoriferous Ind, whose office is
To gather home betimes the ethereal flock,
To pour them o'er the skies again at eve,
And to discriminate the night and day.
Still Cynthia's changeful horn waxes and wanes
Alternate, and with arms extended still
She welcomes to her breast her brother's beams.
Nor have the elements deserted yet
Their functions; thunder with as loud a stroke
As erst smites through the rocks and scatters them.
The east still howls; still the relentless north
Invades the shuddering Scythian, still he breathes
The winter, and still rolls the storms along.
The king of ocean, with his wonted force,
Beats on Pelorus; o'er the deep is heard
The hoarse alarm of Triton's sounding shell;
Nor swim the monsters of the Ægean sea
In shallows, or beneath diminished waves.
Thou too, thy ancient vegetative power
Enjoy'st, O Earth! Narcissus still is sweet;
And Phœbus! still thy favorite, and still
Thy favorite Cytherea! both retain
Their beauty; nor their mountains, ore-enrich'd
For punishment of man, with purer gold
Teem'd ever, or with brighter gems the deep.
Thus in unbroken series all proceeds;
And shall, till wide involving either pole,
And the immensity of yonder heaven,
The final flames of destiny absorb
The world, consumed in one enormous pyre!

ON THE PLATONIC IDEA AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY ARISTOTLE.

Ye sister powers, who o'er the sacred groves
Preside, and thou, fair mother of them all,
Mnemosyne! and thou who, in thy grot
Immense, reclined at leisure, hast in charge
The archives and the ordinances of Jove,
And dost record the festivals of heaven,
Eternity!—inform us who is He,
That great original, by nature chosen
To be the archetype of human kind,
Unchangeable, immortal, with the poles
Themselves coëval, one, yet everywhere,
An image of the God who gave him being?
Twin-brother of the goddess born from Jove,
He dwells not in his father's mind, but, though
Of common nature with ourselves, exists
Apart, and occupies a local home—
Whether companion of the stars, he spend
Eternal ages, roaming at his will [dwell
From sphere to sphere, the tenfold heavens, or
On the moon's side that nearest neighbors earth,
Or torpid on the banks of Lethe sit
Among the multitude of souls ordain'd
To flesh and blood; or whether (as may chance)
That vast and giant model of our kind
In some far distant region of this globe
Sequester'd stalk with lifted head on high
O'ertowering Atlas, on whose shoulders rest
The stars, terrific even to the gods.
Never the Theban seer, whose blindness proved
His best illumination, him beheld
In secret vision; never him the son
Of Pleione, amid the noiseless night
Descending to the prophet choir reveal'd;
Him never knew the Assyrian priest, who yet
The ancestry of Ninus' chronicles,
And Belus, and Osiris, far renown'd;
Nor even thrice great Hermes, although skill'd
So deep in mystery, to the worshippers
Of Isis show'd a prodigy like him.
And thou, who hast immortalized the shades
Of Academus, if the schools received
This monster of the fancy first from thee,
Either recall at once thy banish'd bards
To thy republic, or thyself, evinced
A wilder fabulist, go also forth.

TO HIS FATHER.

Oh that Pieria's spring would through my breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood;
That, for my venerable father's sake [wings
All meaner themes renounced, my muse, on
Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain!
For thee, my father! howsoe'er it please,

She frames this slender work; nor know I aught
That may thy gifts more suitably requite:
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude:
But, such as I possess, I send thee all.
This page presents thee in their full amount
With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought;
Nought, save the riches that from airy dream
In secret grottoes and in laurel bowers,
I have, by golden Clio's gift, acquired.
Verse is a work divine; despise not thou
Verse therefore, which evinces (nothing more)
Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespeaks him animated from above.
The gods love verse; the infernal powers themselves
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the shades.
In verse the Delphic priestess and the pale
Tremulous sybil make the future known;
And he who sacrifices on the shrine
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threatening bull
And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
To scrutinize the fates enveloped there.
We too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies, and one eternal now
Shall be the only measure of our being,
Crown'd all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the starry firmament resound.
And, even now, the fiery spirit pure
That wheels yon circling orbs, directs himself
Their mazy dance with melody of verse
Unutterable, immortal, hearing which
Huge Ophiuchus holds his hiss suppress'd;
Orion, soften'd, drops his ardent blade,
And Atlas stands unconscious of his load.
Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
Luxurious dainties, destined to the gulf
Immense of gluttony, were known, and ere
Lyæus deluged yet the temperate board.
Then sat the bard a customary guest
To share the banquet, and, his length of locks
With beechen honors bound, proposed in verse
The characters of heroes and their deeds,
To imitation; sang of chaos old,
Of nature's birth, of gods that crept in search
Of acorns fallen, and of the thunderbolt
Not yet produced from Ætna's fiery cave.
And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
Devoid of matter! Such may suit perhaps
The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear,
And the oaks follow'd. Not by chords alone
Well touch'd, but by resistless accents more,
To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
He moved; these praises to his verse he owes.
Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless powers, by whom inspired, thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoin'd
In close affinity, we sympathize
In social arts and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also, and between us we receive
Father and son, the whole inspiring God.
No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle muse,
My father! for thou never badest me tread
The beaten path, and broad, that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamors of the bar,
To laws voluminous, and ill observed;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, ledd'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts,
My father! who, when I had open'd once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learn'd
The full-ton'd language of the eloquent Greeks,
Whose lofty music graced the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flowers
That Gallia boasts, those too, with which the smooth
Italian his degenerate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth;
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.
To sum the whole, whate'er the heaven contains,
The earth beneath it, and the air between,
The rivers and the restless deep, may all
Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
Concurring with thy will; science herself,
All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head,
And offers me the lip, if, dull of heart,
I shrink not, and decline her gracious boon.
Go now, and gather dross, ye sordid minds
That covet it; what could my father more?
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode, the heaven in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe
As they were insecure, who made the boy
The world's vice luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all-dazzling wreath.
I therefore, although last and least my place
Among the learned in the laurel grove
Will hold, and where the conqueror's ivy twines,
Henceforth exempt from the unletter'd throng
Profane, nor even to be seen by such,
Away then, sleepless care, complaint, away,
And envy, with thy "jealous leer malign!"
Nor let the monster calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileged, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high for your viperean wound.
But thou, my father, since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasured in a grateful mind!
Ye, too, the favorite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Lethæan gulf,
Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the fathers of a distant age!

TO SALSILLUS, A ROMAN POET, MUCH INDISPOSED.

The original is written in a measure called Scazon, which signifies limping, and the measure is so denominated, because, though in other respects Iambic, it terminates with a Spondee, and has, consequently, a more tardy movement.

The reader will immediately see that this property of the Latin verse cannot be imitated in English.

My halting muse, that dragg'st by choice along
Thy slow, slow step, in melancholy song,
And likest that pace, expressive of thy cares,
Not less than Diopeia's sprightlier airs, [tread
When in the dance she beats with measured
Heaven's floor, in front of Juno's golden bed;
Salute Salsillus, who to verse divine
Prefers, with partial love, such lays as mine.
Thus writes that Milton, then, who, wafted o'er
From his own nest on Albion's stormy shore,
Where Eurus, fiercest of the Æolian band,
Sweeps with ungovern'd rage the blasted land,
Of late to more serene Ausonia came
To view her cities of illustrious name,
To prove himself a witness of the truth,
How wise her elders, and how learn'd her youth.
Much good, Salsillus! and a body free
From all disease, that Milton asks for thee,
Who now endurest the languor and the pains
That bile inflicts, diffused through all thy veins;
Relentless malady! not moved to spare
By thy sweet Roman voice and Lesbian air!
Health, Hebe's sister, sent us from the skies,
And thou, Apollo, whom all sickness flies,
Pythius, or Pæan, or what name divine
So'er thou choose, haste, heal a priest of thine!
Ye groves of Faunus, and ye hills that melt
With vinous dews, where meek Evander dwelt!
If aught salubrious in your confines grow,
Strive which shall soonest heal your poet's woe,
That, render'd to the muse, he loves, again
He may enchant the meadow with his strain.
Numa, reclined in everlasting ease
Amid the shade of dark embowering trees,
Viewing with eyes of unabated fire
His loved Ægeria, shall that strain admire:
So soothed, the tumid Tiber shall revere
The tombs of kings, nor desolate the year,
Shall curb his waters with a friendly reign,
And guide them harmless, till they meet the main.

TO GIOVANNI BATTISTA MANSO,

MARQUIS OF VILLA.

MILTON'S ACCOUNT OF MANSO.

Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen, for genius, literature, and military accomplishments. To him Torquato Tasso addressed his Dialogues on Friendship, for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country, in his poem entitled, Gerusalemme Conquistata, book xx.

Fra cavalier magnanimi, e cortesi,
Risplende il Manso.

During the author's stay at Naples, he received at the hands of the marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities, and, desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city.

These verses also to thy praise, the Nine.
O Manso! happy in that theme, design,
For, Gallus and Mæcenas gone, they see
None such besides, or whom they love as thee;
And if my verse may give the meed of fame,
Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
Already such, it shines in Tasso's page
(For thou wast Tasso's friend) from age to age,
And, next, the muse consign'd (not unaware
How high the charge) Marino to thy care,
Who, singing to the nymphs Adonis' praise,
Boasts thee the patron of his copious lays.
To thee alone the poet would entrust
His latest vows, to thee alone his dust;
And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
In labor'd brass, thy tribute to his shade.
Nor this contented thee—but lest the grave
Should aught absorb of theirs which thou couldst save,
All future ages thou hast deign'd to teach
The life, lot, genius, character of each,
Eloquent as the Carian sage, who, true
To his great theme, the life of Homer drew.
I, therefore, though a stranger youth, who come [home,
Chill'd by rude blasts that freeze my northern
Thee dear to Clio, confident proclaim,
And thine, for Phœbus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A muse scarce rear'd beneath our sullen sky,
Who fears not, indiscreet as she is young,
To seek in Latin hearers of her song.
We too, where Thames with its unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-hair'd Ocean laves,
Hear oft by night, or, slumbering, seem to hear
O'er his wide stream, the swan's voice warbling clear;
And we could boast a Tityrus of yore
Who trod, a welcome guest, your happy shore.
Yes—dreary as we own our northern clime,
E'en we to Phœbus raise the polish'd rhyme,
We too serve Phœbus; Phœbus has received
(If legends old may claim to be believed)
No sordid gifts from us, the golden car,
The burnish'd apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and, to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train;
Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who gods and heroes praised in hallow'd rhyme!
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They named the virgins who arrived of yore
With British offerings on the Delian shore,
Loxo, from giant Corineus sprung,
Upis, on whose blest lips the future hung,
And Hacaerge, with the golden hair,
All deek'd with Pictish hues, and all with bosoms bare.
Thou, therefore, happy sage, whatever clime
Shall ring with Tasso's praise in after time,
Or with Marino's, shalt be known their friend,
And with an equal flight to fame ascend.
The world shall hear how Phœbus and the Nine
Were inmates once, and willing guests of thine.
Yet Phœbus, when of old constrain'd to roam
The earth, an exile from his heavenly home,
Enter'd, no willing guest, Admetus' door,
Though Hercules had ventured there before.
But gentle Chiron's cave was near, a scene
Of rural peace, clothed with perpetual green,
And thither, oft as respite he required,
From rustic clamors loud, the god retired.
There, many a time, on Peneus' bank reclined
At some oak's root, with ivy thick entwined,

Won by his hospitable friend's desire,
He soothed his pains of exile with the lyre.
Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,
Nor Œta felt his load of forest more;
The upland elms descended to the plain,
And soften'd lynxes wonder'd at that strain.
Well may we think, Oh, dear to all above!
Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove,
And that Apollo shed his kindliest power,
And Maia's son, on that propitious hour.
Since only minds so born can comprehend
A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.
Hence on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
The lingering freshness of thy greener years;
Hence in thy front and features we admire
Nature unwither'd and a mind entire.
O might so true a friend to me belong,
So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime,
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being future wars,
With all his martial knights to be restored
Each to his seat around the federal board;
And oh, if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plunderers in triumph verse!
Then, after all, when, with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent;
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my deathbed bend,
I shall but need to say "Be yet my friend!"
He too, perhaps shall bid the marble breathe
To honor me, and with the graceful wreath
Or of Parnassus or the Paphian isle
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.
Then also, if the fruits of faith endure,
And virtue's promised recompense be sure,
Born to those seats to which the blest aspire
By purity of soul and virtuous fire,
These rites, as fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumined by celestial day,
And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
Joy in the bright beatitude of heaven!

ON THE DEATH OF DAMON.

THE ARGUMENT.

Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds and neighbors, had always pursued the same studies, and had, from their earliest days, been united in the closest friendship. Thyrsis, while travelling for improvement, received intelligence of the death of Damon, and, after a time, returning and finding it true, deplores himself and his solitary condition, in this poem.

By Damon is to be understood Charles Deodati, connected with the Italian city of Lucca by his father's side, in other respects an Englishman; a youth of uncommon genius, erudition, and virtue.

Ye Nymphs of Himera, (for ye have shed
Erewhile for Daphnis, and for Hylas dead,
And over Bion's long-lamented bier,
The fruitless meed of many a sacred tear,)
Now through the villas laved by Thames rehearse
The woes of Thyrsis in Sicilian verse,
What sighs he heaved, and how with groans profound
He made the woods and hollow rocks resound
Young Damon dead; nor ever ceased to pour
His lonely sorrows at the midnight hour.
The green wheat twice had nodded in the ear,
And golden harvest twice enrich'd the year,
Since Damon's lips had gasp'd for vital air,
The last, last time, nor Thyrsis yet was there;
For he, enamoured of the muse, remain'd
In Tuscan Fiorenza long detain'd,
But, stored at length with all he wish'd to learn,
For his flock's sake, now hasted to return;
And when the shepherd had resumed his seat
At the elm's root, within his old retreat,
Then 'twas his lot then all his loss to know,
And from his burden'd heart he vented thus his woe:
"Go seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Alas! what deities shall I suppose
In heaven, or earth, concerned for human woes,
Since, oh my Damon! their severe decree
So soon condemns me to regret of thee!
Depart'st thou thus, thy virtues unrepaid
With fame and honor, like a vulgar shade!
Let him forbid it, whose bright rod controls,
And separates sordid from illustrious souls,
Drive far the rabble, and to thee assign
A happier lot with spirits worthy thine!
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Whate'er befall, unless by cruel chance
The wolf first give me a forbidding glance,
Thou shalt not moulder undeplored, but long
Thy praise shall dwell on every shepherd's tongue.
To Daphnis first they shall delight to pay,
And, after him, to thee the votive lay,
While Pales shall the flocks and pastures love,
Or Faunus to frequent the field or grove;
At least, if ancient piety and truth,
With all the learned labors of thy youth,
May serve thee aught, or to have left behind
A sorrowing friend, and of the tuneful kind.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Who now my pains and perils shall divide,
As thou wast wont, for ever at my side,
Both when the rugged frost annoy'd our feet,
And when the herbage all was parch'd with heat;
Whether the grim wolf's ravage to prevent,
Or the huge lion's, arm'd with darts we went;
Whose converse now shall calm my stormy day,
With charming song who now beguile my way?
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
In whom shall I confide? Whose counsel find
A balmy medicine for my troubled mind?
Or whose discourse with innocent delight
Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night,
While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
And blackening chestnuts start and crackle there,
While storms abroad the dreary meadows whelm,
And the wind thunders through the neighboring elm?
"Go seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
And Pan sleeps hidden by the sheltering beech,
When shepherds disappear, nymphs seek the sedge,
And the stretch'd rustic snores beneath the hedge,
Who then shall render me thy pleasant vein
Of Attic wit, thy jests, thy smiles again?

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Where glens and vales are thickest overgrown
With tangled boughs, I wander now alone,
Till night descend, while blustering wind and shower
Beat on my temples through the shatter'd bower.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Alas! what rampant weeds now shame my fields,
And what a mildew'd crop the furrow yields;
My rambling vines unwedded to the trees,
Bear shrivell'd grapes; my myrtles fail to please;
Nor please me more my flocks; they, slighted turn
Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Ægon invites me to the hazel grove,
Amyntas, on the river's bank to rove,
And young Alphesibœus to a seat
Where branching elms exclude the mid-day heat.
'Here fountains spring—here mossy hillocks rise;
Here zephyr whispers, and the stream replies.'—
Thus each persuades, but, deaf to every call,
I gain the thickets, and escape them all.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Then Mopsus said, (the same who reads so well
The voice of birds, and what the stars forctell,
For he by chance had noticed my return,)
'What means thy sullen mood, this deep concern?
Ah, Thyrsis, thou art either crazed with love,
Or some sinister influence from above;
Dull Saturn's influence oft the shepherds rue;
His leaden shaft oblique has pierc'd thee through.'
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
The nymphs, amazed, my melancholy see,
And, 'Thyrsis!' cry—'what will become of thee?
What wouldst thou, Thyrsis? such should not appear
The brow of youth, stern, gloomy, and severe;
Brisk youth should laugh and love—ah, shun the fate [late!'
Of those, twice wretched mopes! who love too
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ægle with Hyas came, to soothe my pain,
And Baucis' daughter, Dryope, the vain,
Fair Dryope, for voice and finger neat
Known far and near, and for her self-conceit;
Chloris too came, whose cottage on the lands
That skirt the Idumanian current stands;
But all in vain they came, and but to see
Kind words, and comfortable, lost on me.
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah blest indifference of the playful herd,
None by his fellow chosen, or preferr'd!
No bonds of amity the flocks inthral,
But each associates, and is pleased with all;
So graze the dappled deer in numerous droves,
And all his kind alike the zebra loves;
That same law governs, where the billows roar,
And Proteus' shoals o'erspread the desert shore;
The sparrow, meanest of the feather'd race,
His fit companion finds in every place,
With whom he picks the grain that suits him best,
Flirts here and there, and late returns to rest,
And whom, if chance the falcon makes his prey,
Or hedger with his well aim'd arrow slay,
For no such loss the gay survivor grieves,
New love he seeks, and new delight receives.
We only, an obdurate kind, rejoice,
Scorning all others, in a single choice.
We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind,
And if the long-sought good at last we find,
When least we fear it, Death our treasure steals,
And gives our heart a wound that nothing heals.
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah, what delusion lured me from my flocks,
To traverse Alpine snows and rugged rocks!
What need so great had I to visit Rome,
Now sunk in ruins, and herself a tomb?
Or had she flourish'd still, as when of old,
For her sake Tityrus forsook his fold.
What need so great had I to incur a pause
Of thy sweet intercourse for such a cause,
For such a cause to place the roaring sea,
Rocks, mountains, woods, between my friend and me?
Else had I grasp'd thy feeble hand, composed
Thy decent limbs, thy drooping eyelids closed,
And, at the last, had said—Farewell—ascend—
Nor even in the skies forget thy friend!'
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Although well pleased, ye tuneful Tuscan swains!
My mind the memory of your worth retains.
Yet not your worth can teach me less to mourn
My Damon lost.—He too was Tuscan born,
Born in your Lucca, city of renown!
And wit possess'd, and genius, like your own.
Oh how elate was I, when, stretch'd beside
The murmuring course of Arno's breezy tide,
Beneath the poplar grove I pass'd my hours,
Now cropping myrtles, and now vernal flowers,
And hearing, as I lay at ease along,
Your swains contending for the prize of song!
I also dared attempt (and, as it seems,
Not much displeased attempting) various themes
For even I can presents boast from you,
The shepherd's pipe and ozier basket too,
And Dati and Francini both have made
My name familiar to the beechen shade,
And they are learn'd, and each in every place
Renown'd for song, and both of Lydian race.
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
While bright the dewy grass with moonbeams shone,
And I stood hurdling in my kids alone,
How often have I said (but thou hadst found
Ere then thy dark cold lodgment underground)
Now Damon sings, or springes sets for hares,
Or wickerwork for various use prepares!
How oft, indulging fancy, have I plann'd
New scenes of pleasure that I hoped at hand,
Call'd thee abroad as I was wont, and cried—
'What, hoa! my friend—come lay thy task aside;
Haste, let us forth together, and beguile
The heat beneath yon whispering shades awhile,
Or on the margin stray of Colne's clear flood,
Or where Cassibelan's grey turrets stood!

There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
Thy friend the name and healing powers of each,
From the tall bluebell to the dwarfish weed,
What the dry land, and what the marshes breed,
For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
And the whole art of Galen is thy own.'
Ah, perish Galen's art, and wither'd be
The useless herbs that gave not health to thee!
Twelve evenings since, as in poetic dream,
I meditating sat some statelier theme,
The reeds no sooner touch'd my lip, though new,
And unessay'd before, than wide they flew,
Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
The deep-toned music of the solemn strain;
And I am vain perhaps, but I will tell
How proud a theme I chose—ye groves, farewell.
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
How with his barks he plough'd the British sea,
First from Rutupia's towering headland seen,
And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen;
Of Brennus and Belinus brothers bold,
And of Arviragus, and how of old
Our hardy sires the Armorican controll'd,
And of the wife of Gorlois, who, surprised
By Uther, in her husband's form disguised,
(Such was the force of Merlin's art,) became
Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.
These themes I now revolve—and Oh—if Fate
Proportion to these themes my lengthen'd date,
Adieu my shepherd's reed—yon pine tree bough
Shall be thy future home, there dangle thou
Forgotten and disused, unless ere long
Thou change thy Latin for a British song:
A British?—even so—the powers of man
Are bounded; little is the most he can;
And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame and proud recompense enough for me,
If Usa, golden-hair'd, my verse may learn,
If Alain bending o'er his crystal urn,
Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadow'd stream,
Thames, lovelier far than all in my esteem,
Tamar's ore-tinctured flood, and, after these,
The wave-worn shores of utmost Oreades.
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
All this I kept in leaves of laurel rind
Enfolded safe, and for thy view design'd.
This—and a gift from Manso's hand beside,
(Manso, not least his native city's pride,)
Two cups that radiant as their giver shown,
Adorn'd by sculpture with a double zone.
The spring was graven there; here slowly wind
The Red sea shores with groves of spices lined;
Her plumes of various hues amid the boughs
The sacred, solitary phœnix shows,
And, watchful of the dawn, reverts her head
To see Aurora leave her watery bed.
—In other part, the expansive vault above,
And there too, even there, the god of love;
With quiver arm'd he mounts, his torch displays
A vivid light, his gem-tipt arrows blaze.
Around his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls,
Nor deigns one look below, but, aiming high,
Sends every arrow to the lofty sky;
Hence forms divine, and minds immortal, learn
The power of Cupid, and enamour'd burn.
"Thou, also, Damon, (neither need I fear
That hope delusive,) thou art also there;
For whither should simplicity like thine
Retire, where else should spotless virtue shine?
Thou dwell'st not (thought profane) in shades below,
Nor tears suit thee—cease then, my tears, to flow.
Away with grief; on Damon ill bestow'd!
Who, pure himself, has found a pure abode,
Has pass'd the showery arch, henceforth resides
With saints and heroes, and from flowing tides
Quaffs copious immortality and joy
With hallow'd lips!—Oh! blest without alloy,
And now enrich'd with all that faith can claim,
Look down, entreated by whatever name,
If Damon please thee most (that rural sound
Shall oft with echoes fill the groves around)
Or if Deodatus, by which alone
In those ethereal mansions thou art known.
Thy blush was maiden, and thy youth the taste
Of wedded bliss knew never, pure and chaste,
The honors, therefore, by divine decree
The lot of virgin worth, are given to thee:
Thy brows encircled with a radiant band,
And the green palm branch waving in thy hand,
Thou in immortal nuptials shalt rejoice,
And join with seraphs thy according voice,
Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire."

AN ODE ADDRESSED TO MR. JOHN ROUSE,

LIBRARIAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

On a lost Volume of my Poems, which he desired me to replace, that he might add them to my other Works deposited in the Library.

This ode is rendered without rhyme, that it might more adequately represent the original, which, as Milton himself informs us, is of no certain Measure. It may possibly for this reason disappoint the reader, though it cost the writer more labor than the translation of any other piece in the whole collection.

STROPHE.

My twofold book! single in show
But double in contents,
Neat but not curiously adorn'd,
Which, in his early youth,
A poet gave, no lofty one in truth,
Although an earnest wooer of the muse—
Say, while in cool Ausonian shades
Or British wilds he roam'd,
Striking by turns his native lyre,
By turns the Daunian lute,
And stepp'd almost in air—

ANTISTROPHE.

Say, little book, what furtive hand
Thee from thy fellow books convey'd,
What time, at the repeated suit
Of my most learned friend,
I sent thee forth an honor'd traveller,
From our great city to the source of Thames,
Cærulean sire!
Where rise the fountains and the raptures ring,
Of the Aonian choir,
Durable as yonder spheres,
And through the endless lapse of years
Secure to be admired?

STROPHE II.

Now what god, or demi-god,
For Britain's ancient genius moved,
(If our afflicted land
Have expiated at length the guilty sloth
Of her degenerate sons)
Shall terminate our impious feuds,
And discipline with hallow'd voice recall?
Recall the muses too,
Driven from their ancient seats
In Albion, and well nigh from Albion's shore,
And, with keen Phœbean shafts
Piercing the unseemly birds,
Whose talons menace us,
Shall drive the Harpy race from Helicon afar?

ANTISTROPHE.

But thou, my book, though thou hast stray'd,
Whether by treachery lost,
Or indolent neglect thy bearer's fault,
From all thy kindred books,
To some dark cell or cave forlorn,
Where thou endurest, perhaps,
The chafing of some hard untutor'd hand,
Be comforted—
For lo! again the splendid hope appears
That thou mayst yet escape
The gulfs of Lethe, and on oary wings
Mount to the everlasting courts of Jove!

STROPHE III.

Since Rouse desires thee, and complains
That, though by promise his,
Thou yet appear'st not in thy place
Among the literary noble stores
Given to his care,
But, absent, leavest his numbers incomplete.
He, therefore, guardian vigilant
Of that unperishing wealth,
Calls thee to the interior shrine, his charge,
Where he intends a richer treasure far
That Iön kept (Iön, Erectheus' son
Illustrious of the fair Creüsa born)
In the resplendent temple of his god,
Tripods of gold, and Delphic gifts divine.

ANTISTROPHE.

Haste, then, to the pleasant groves,
The muses' favorite haunt;
Resume thy station in Apollo's dome,
Dearer to him
Than Delos, or the fork'd Parnassian hill!
Exulting go,
Since now a splendid lot is also thine,
And thou art sought by my propitious friend;
For there thou shalt be read
With authors of exalted note,
The ancient glorious lights of Greece and Rome.

EPODE.

Ye, then, my works no longer vain,
And worthless deem'd by me!
Whate'er this sterile genius has produced,
Expect, at last, the rage of envy spent,
An unmolested happy home,
Gift of kind Hermes, and my watchful friend,
Where never flippant tongue profane
Shall entrance find,
And whence the coarse unletter'd multitude
Shall babble far remote.
Perhaps some future distant age,
Less tinged with prejudice, and better taught,
Shall furnish minds of power
To judge more equally.
Then, malice silenced in the tomb,
Cooler heads and sounder hearts,
Thanks to Rouse, if aught of praise
I merit, shall with candor weigh the claim.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE ITALIAN POEMS.

SONNET.

Fair Lady! whose harmonious name the Rhine,
Through all his grassy vale, delights to hear,
Base were indeed the wretch who could forbear
To love a spirit elegant as thine,
That manifests a sweetness all divine,
Nor knows a thousand winning acts to spare,
And graces, which Love's bow and arrows are,
Tempering thy virtues to a softer shine.
When gracefully thou speak'st, or singest gay
Such strains as might the senseless forest move,
Ah then—turn each his eyes and ears away,
Who feels himself unworthy of thy love!
Grace can alone preserve him ere the dart
Of fond desire yet reach his inmost heart.

SONNET.

As on a hill-top rude, when closing day
Imbrowns the scene, some pastoral maiden fair
Waters a lovely foreign plant with care,
Borne from its native genial airs away,
That scarcely can its tender bud display,
So, on my tongue these accents, new and rare,
Are flowers exotic, which Love waters there.
While thus, O sweetly scornful! I essay
Thy praise in verse to British ears unknown,
And Thames exchange for Arno's fair domain;
So love has will'd, and oftimes Love has shown,
That what he wills, he never wills in vain—
Oh that this hard and sterile breast might be
To Him, who plants from heaven, a soil as free!

CANZONE.

They mock my toil—the nymphs and amorous swains—
And whence this fond attempt to write, they cry,
Love-songs in language that thou little know'st?
How darest thou risk to sing these foreign strains?
Say truly. Find'st not oft thy purpose cross'd,
And that thy fairest flowers here fade and die?
Then with pretence of admiration high—
Thee other shores expect and other tides,
Rivers, on whose grassy sides
Her deathless laurel leaf, with which to bind
Thy flowing locks already Fame provides;
Why then this burden, better far declin'd?

Speak, muse! for me—the fair one said, who guides
My willing heart, and all my fancy's flights,
"This is the language in which Love delights."

SONNET, TO CHARLES DEODATI.

Charles—and I say it wondering—thou must know
That I, who once assumed a scornful air
And scoff'd at Love, am fallen in his snare,
(Full many an upright man has fallen so:)
Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow
Of golden locks, or damask cheek; more rare
The heartfelt beauties of my foreign fair;
A mien majestic, with dark brows that show
The tranquil lustre of a lofty mind;
Words exquisite, of idioms more than one,
And song whose fascinating power might bind,
And from her sphere draw down the laboring moon;
With such fire-darting eyes that, should I fill
My ears with wax, she would enchant me still.

SONNET.

Lady! It cannot be but that thine eyes
Must be my sun, such radiance they display,
And strike me e'en as Phœbus him whose way
Through horrid Libya's sandy desert lies.
Meantime, on that side steamy vapors rise
Where most I suffer. Of what kind are they,
New as to me they are, I cannot say,
But deem them, in the lover's language—sighs.
Some, though with pain, my bosom close conceals,
Which, if in part escaping thence, they tend
To soften thine, thy coldness soon congeals.
While others to my tearful eyes ascend,
Whence my sad nights in showers are ever drown'd,
Till my Aurora comes, her brow with roses bound,

SONNET.

Enamor'd, artless, young, on foreign ground,
Uncertain whither from myself to fly;
To thee, dear Lady with an humble sigh
Let me devote my heart, which I have found
By certain proofs, not few, intrepid, sound,
Good, and addicted to conceptions high: [sky,
When tempests shake the world, and fire the
It rests in adamant self-wrapt around,
As safe from envy as from outrage rude,
From hopes and fears that vulgar minds abuse,
As fond of genius, and fix'd fortitude,
Of the resounding lyre and every muse.
Weak you will find it in one only part,
Now pierced by love's immedicable dart.

SIMILE IN PARADISE LOST.

'So when, from mountain tops, the dusky clouds
Ascending,' &c.

Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes
Cum surgunt, et jam Boreæ tumida ora quiêrunt,
Cœlum hilares abdit, spissâ caligine, vultus:
Tum, si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore,
Et crocco montes et pascua lumine tingat,
Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros
Balatuque ovium colles vallesque resultant.

TRANSLATION OF DRYDEN'S EPIGRAM ON MILTON.

Tres tria, sed longè distantia, sæcula vates
Ostentant tribus è gentibus eximios.
Græcia sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrique parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est,
Tertius ut fieret, consociare duos.

July, 1780.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

I. THE GLOWWORM.

Beneath the hedge, or near the stream,
A worm is known to stray,
That shows by night a lucid beam
Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,
From whence his rays proceed;
Some give that honor to his tail,
And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of night
That kindles up the skies,
Gives him a modicum of light
Proportion'd to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
By such a lamp bestow'd,
To bid the traveller, as he went,
Be careful where he trod:

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling stone by night,
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine
Is legible and plain,
'Tis power almighty bids him shine,
Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme
Teach humbler thoughts to you,
Since such a reptile has its gem,
And boasts its splendor too.

II. THE JACKDAW.

There is a bird who, by his coat
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where, bishop-like, he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather.
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the rareeshow,
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs and its businesses,
Is no concern at all of his,
And says—what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine
And such a head between 'em.

III. THE CRICKET.

Little inmate, full of mirth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be express'd,
Inoffensive, welcome guest!
While the rat is on the scout,
And the mouse with curious snout,
With what vermin else infest
Every dish, and spoil the best;
Frisking thus before the fire,
Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
Form'd as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Theirs is but a summer's song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpaired, and shrill, and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night nor dawn of day
Puts a period to thy play:
Sing, then—and extend thy span
Far beyond the date of man.
Wretched man, whose years are spent
In repining discontent,
Lives not, aged though he be,
Half a span, compared with thee.

IV. THE PARROT.

In painted plumes superbly dress'd,
A native of the gorgeous east,
By many a billow toss'd;
Poll gains at length the British shore,
Part of the captain's precious store,
A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferr'd,
To teach him now then a word,
As Poll can master it;
But 'tis her own important charge,
To qualify him more at large,
And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll! his doting mistress cries,
Sweet Poll! the mimic bird replies,
And calls aloud for sack.
She next instructs him in the kiss;
'Tis now a little one, like Miss,
And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears;
And, listening close with both his ears,
Just catches at the sound;
But soon articulates aloud,
Much to the amusement of the crowd,
And stuns the neighbors round.

A querulous old woman's voice
His humorous talent next employs,
He scolds, and gives the lie.
And now he sings, and now is sick,
Here, Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
Poor Poll is like to die!

Belinda and her bird! 'tis rare
To meet with such a well match'd pair,
The language and the tone,
Each character in every part
Sustain'd with so much grace and art,
And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell,
And stammer out a syllable,
We think them tedious creatures;
But difficulties soon abate,
When birds are to be taught to prate,
And women are the teachers.

THE THRACIAN.

Thracian parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But, with undissembled mirth,
Place him breathless on his bier,

Greece and Rome, with equal scorn,
"O the savages!" exclaim,
"Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name!"

But the cause of this concern
And this pleasure would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

RECIPROCAL KINDNESS THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE.

ANDROCLES, from his injured lord, in dread
Of instant death, to Lybia's desert fled, [heat,
Tired with his toilsome flight, and parch'd with
He spied at length a cavern's cool retreat;
But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
When, hugest of his kind, a lion came:
He roar'd approaching: but the savage din
To plaintive murmurs changed—arrived within,
And with expressive looks, his lifted paw
Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw.
The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand;
But bolder grown, at length inherent found
A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
The cure was wrought; he wiped the sanious blood,
And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day
Regales his inmate with the parted prey.
Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared.
But thus to live—still lost—sequester'd still—
Scarce seem'd his lord's revenge a heavier ill.
Home! native home! O might he but repair!
He must—he will, though death attends him there.
He goes, and, doom'd to perish, on the sands
Of the full theatre unpitied stands:
When lo! the selfsame lion from his cage
Flies to devour him, famish'd into rage.
He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And, soften'd by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.
Mute with astonishment, the assembly gaze:
But why, ye Romans? Whence your mute amaze?
All this is natural: nature bade him rend
An enemy: she bids him spare a friend.

A MANUAL,

MORE ANCIENT THAN THE ART OF PRINTING, AND NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY CATALOGUE.

THERE is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such)
Alone a library, though small;
The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things numerous it contains:
And things with words compared,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merits most regard?

Ofttimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast;
And open'd, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name, nor title, stamp'd behind,
Adorns its outer part;

But all within, 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit: and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of every size,
And form'd for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes),
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page;
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such, from age.

The full charg'd leaf which next ensues,
Presents in bright array
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask,
Who with a more discerning eye
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease,
From size to size they fall,
In every leaf grow less and less;
The last are least of all.

O! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space is here!
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear!

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or posed, whoever reads:
No commentator's tedious gloss,
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er!
No book is treasured there,
Nor yet in Granta's numerous store,
That may with this compare.

No!—rival none in either host
Of this was ever seen,
Or, that contents could justly boast,
So brilliant and so keen.

AN ENIGMA.

A NEEDLE, small as small can be,
In bulk and use surpasses me,
Nor is my purchase dear;
For little, and almost for nought,
As many of my kind are bought
As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
And are procured at little cost
The labor is not light;
Nor few artificers it asks,
All skilful in their several tasks,
To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
A second draws it into wire,
The sheers another plies;
Who clips in length the brazen thread
From him who, chafing every shred,
Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
The knob with which it must be crown'd;
His follower makes it fast:
And with his mallet and his file
To shape the point, employs awhile
The seventh and the last.

Now, therefore, Œdipus! declare
What creature, wonderful, and rare,
A process that obtains
Its purpose with so much ado
At last produces!—tell me true,
And take me for your pains!

SPARROWS SELF-DOMESTICATED IN TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

None ever shared the social feast,
Or as an inmate or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
Who saw not (and with some delight
Perhaps he view'd the novel sight)
How numerous at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there in every nook and cell
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nest they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which kindly given, may serve with food
Convenient their unfeather'd brood;
And oft as with its summons clear
The warning bell salutes their ear,
Sagacious listeners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.
Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge;
A single doit would overpay
The expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place?

FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS.

As in her ancient mistress' lap
The youthful tabby lay,
They gave each other many a tap,
Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protruded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground
With many a threat that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest:
It was a venial stroke:
For she that will with kittens jest
Should bear a kitten's joke.

INVITATION TO THE REDBREAST.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat while he reigns
In the well-shelter'd dwellings of man,
Who never can seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My windows shall show thee a feast,
For, taught by experience, I know,
Thee mindful of benefit long;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing:
And shouldst thou, compell'd by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou paid'st me before.

This music must needs be confess'd
To flow from a fountain above;
Else how should it work in the breast
Unchangeable friendship and love?
And who on the globe can be found,
Save your generation and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
Or boasts any musical powers?

STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE.

The shepherd touch'd his reed; sweet Philomel
Essay'd, and oft essay'd to catch the strain,
And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
The numbers, echo'd note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
And soon (for various was his tuneful store)
In loftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and rising as he rose,
With all the force that passion gives inspired,
Return'd the sounds awhile, but in the close
Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength not skill prevail'd. O fatal strife,
By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun;
And, O sad victory, which cost thy life,
And he may wish that he had never won!

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A LADY,

WHO LIVED ONE HUNDRED YEARS, AND DIED ON HER BIRTHDAY, 1728.

Ancient dame, how wide and vast
To a race like ours appears,
Rounded to an orb at last,
All thy multitude of years!

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer and of feebler powers;

We, to narrow bounds confined,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb,
Swifter than a shadow flee,
Nourish'd but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
Lurk in all that we enjoy;
Some that waste us by degrees,
Some that suddenly destroy.

And, if life o'erleap the bourn
Common to the sons of men,
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and dote, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wane
Sorrow comes; and, while we groan,
Pant with anguish, and complain,
Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few (to few 'tis given),
Lingering on this earthly stage,
Creep and halt with steps uneven
To the period of an age,

Wherefore live they, but to see
Cunning, arrogance and force,
Sights lamented much by thee,
Holding their accustom'd course?

Oft was seen, in ages past,
All that we with wonder view;
Often shall be to the last;
Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate, content
Should propitious Heaven design
Life for us as calmly spent,
Though but half the length of thine.

THE CAUSE WON.

Two neighbors furiously dispute;
A field—the subject of the suit.
Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell who covets most
The prize—at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice:
No single word but has its price.
No term but yields some fair pretence
For novel and increased expense.
Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it may disclaim,
Since both in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

THE SILKWORM.

The beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm, scarce visible, disclose;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.
The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulberry leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more!
For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat;
Though till his growing time be past
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arrived, his work begins.
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins;
Till circle upon circle, wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus self-enclosed, as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task:
And, though a worm when he was lost,
Or caterpillar at the most,
When next we see him, wings he wears,
And in papilio pomp appears;
Becomes oviparous; supplies
With future worms and future flies
The next ensuing year—and dies!
Well were it for the world, if all
Who creep about this earthly ball,
Though shorter-lived than most he be,
Were useful in their kind as he.

THE INNOCENT THIEF.

Not a flower can be found in the fields,
Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
From the largest to the least, but it yields
The bee, never wearied, a treasure

Scarce any she quits unexplored
With a dilligence truly exact;
Yet, steal what she may for her hoard
Leaves evidence none of the fact.

Her lucrative task she pursues,
And pilfers with so much address,
That none of their odor they lose,
Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
The cankerworm, in-dwelling foe!
His voracity not thus allays
The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
The pride of the garden devours;
And birds peck the seed from the bed,
Still less to be spared than the flowers.

But she with such delicate skill
Her pillage so fits for her use,
That the chemist in vain with his still
Would labor the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
Nor a benefit blame as a theft;
Since, stole she not all that she steals,
Neither honey nor wax would be left.

DENNER'S OLD WOMAN.

In this mimic form of a matron in years,
How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
The matron herself, in whose old age we see
Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
No wrinkle, or deep-furrow'd frown on the brow!
Her forehead indeed is here circled around
With locks like the ribbon with which they are
bound;
While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin;

But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
Or that indicates life in its winter—is here.
Yet all is express'd with fidelity due,
Nor a pimple or freckle conceal'd from the view.
Many fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
For the labors of art, to the spectacle haste.
The youths all agree, that could old age inspire
The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire,
And the matrons with pleasure confess that they see
Ridiculous nothing or hideous in thee. [decline,
The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a
O wonderful woman! as placid as thine. [engage
Strange magic of art! which the youth can
To pursue, half enamour'd, the features of age;
And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
That she when as old shall be equally fair!
How great is the glory that Denner has gain'd,
Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtain'd.

THE TEARS OF A PAINTER.

Apelles, hearing that his boy
Had just expired—his only joy!
Although the sight with anguish tore him,
Bade place his dear remains before him.
He seized his brush, his colors spread;
And—"Oh! my child, accept,"—he said.
"('Tis all that I can now bestow,)
This tribute of a father's woe!"
Then, faithful to the twofold part,
Both of his feelings and his art,
He closed his eyes with tender care,
And form'd at once a fellow pair.
His brow with amber locks beset,
And lips he drew not livid yet,
And shaded all that he had done
To a just image of his son.
Thus far is well. But view again
The cause of thy paternal pain!
Thy melancholy task fulfil!
It needs the last, last touches still.
Again his pencil's powers he tries,
For on his lips a smile he spies:
And still his cheek unfaded shows
The deepest damask of the rose.
Then, heedful to the finish'd whole,
With fondest eagerness he stole,
Till scarce himself distinctly knew
The cherub copied from the true.
Now, painter cease! Thy task is done.
Long lives this image of thy son;
Nor short-lived shall thy glory prove
Or of thy labor or thy love.

THE MAZE.

From right to left, and to and fro,
Caught in a labyrinth you go,
And turn, and turn, and turn again,
To solve the mystery, but in vain;
Stand still, and breathe, and take from me
A clue, that soon shall set you free!
Not Ariadne, if you met her,
Herself could serve you with a better.
You enter'd easily—find where—
And make with ease your exit there!

NO SORROW PECULIAR TO THE SUFFERER.

The lover, in melodious verses,
His singular distress rehearses;
Still closing with a rueful cry,
"Was ever such a wretch as I!"
Yes! thousands have endured before
All thy distress; some, haply, more.
Unnumber'd Corydons complain,
And Strephons, of the like disdain;
And if thy Chloe be of steel,
Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
Not her alone that censure fits,
Nor thou alone hast lost thy wits.

THE SNAIL.

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there. house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self-collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself has chattles none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind
(He and his house are so combined,)
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

THE CANTAB.

With two spurs or one, and no great matter
which, [switch,
Boots bought, or boots borrow'd, a whip or a
Five shillings or less for the hire of his beast,
Paid part into hand;—you must wait for the rest.
Thus equipt, Academicus climbs up his horse,
And out they both sally for better or worse;
His heart void of fear, and as light as a feather;
And in violent haste to go not knowing whither.
Through the fields and the towns; (see!) he
scampers along: [young.
And is look'd at and laugh'd at by old and by
Till, at length overspent, and his sides smear'd
with blood,
Down tumbles his horse, man and all in the mud.
In a wagon or chaise, shall he finish his route?
Oh! scandalous fate! he must do it on foot.
Young gentlemen, hear!—I am older than you!
The advice that I give I have proved to be true,
Wherever your journey may be, never doubt it,
The faster you ride, you're the longer about it.

TRANSLATIONS OF GREEK VERSES.

FROM THE GREEK OF JULIANUS.

A Spartan, his companion slain,
Alone from battle fled;
His mother, kindling with disdain
That she had borne him, struck him dead;
For courage, and not birth alone,
In Sparta, testifies a son!

ON THE SAME BY PALLADAS.

A Spartan 'scaping from the fight,
His mother met him in his flight,
Upheld a falchion to his breast,
And thus the fugitive address'd:
"Thou canst but live to blot with shame
Indelible thy mother's name,
While every breath that thou shalt draw
Offends against thy country's law;
But if thou perish by this hand,
Myself indeed, throughout the land,
To my dishonor, shall be known
The mother still of such a son;
But Sparta will be safe and free
And that shall serve to comfort me."

AN EPITAPH.

My name—my country—what are they to thee!
What, whether base or proud my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpass'd all other men—
Perhaps I fell below them all—what then?
Suffice it, stranger! that thou seest a tomb—
Thou know'st its use—it hides—no matter whom.

ANOTHER.

Take to thy bosom, gentle earth, a swain
With much hard labor in thy service worn!
He set the vines that clothe yon ample plain,
And he these olives that the vale adorn.
He fill'd with grain the glebe; the rills he led
Through this green herbage, and those fruitful bowers;
Thou, therefore, earth! lie lightly on his head,
His hoary head, and deck his grave with flowers.

ANOTHER.

Painter, this likeness is too strong,
And we shall mourn the dead too long.

ANOTHER.

At threescore winters' end I died
A cheerless being sole and sad;
The nuptial knot I never tied,
And wish my father never had.

BY CALLIMACHUS.

At morn we placed on his funeral bier
Young Melanippus; and, at eventide,
Unable to sustain a loss so dear,
By her own hand his blooming sister died.
Thus Aristippus mourn'd his noble race,
Annihilated by a double blow,
Nor son could hope nor daughter more to embrace,
And all Cyrene sadden'd at his woe.

ON MILTIADES.

Miltiades! thy valor best
(Although in every region known)
The men of Persia can attest,
Taught by thyself at Marathon.

ON AN INFANT.

Bewail not much, my parents! me, the prey
Of ruthless Ades, and sepulchred here.
An infant, in my fifth scarce finish'd year,
He found all sportive, innocent, and gay,
Your young Callimachus; and if I knew
Not many joys, my griefs were also few.

BY HERACLIDES.

In Cnidus born, the consort I became
Of Euphron. Aretimias was my name.
His bed I shared, nor proved a barren bride,
But bore two children at a birth, and died.
One child I leave to solace and uphold
Euphron hereafter, when infirm and old.
And one, for his remembrance' sake, I bear
To Pluto's realm, till he shall join me there.

ON THE REED.

I was of late a barren plant,
Useless, insignificant,
Nor fig, nor grape, nor apple bore,
A native of the marshy shore;
But, gather'd for poetic use,
And plunged into a sable juice,
Of which my modicum I sip
With narrow mouth and slender lip,
At once, although by nature dumb,
All eloquent I have become,
And speak with fluency untired,
As if by Phœbus' self inspired.

TO HEALTH.

Eldest born of powers divine!
Bless'd Hygeia! be it mine
To enjoy what thou canst give,
And henceforth with thee to live:
For in power if pleasure be,
Wealth or numerous progeny,
Or in amorous embrace,
Where no spy infests the place;

Or in aught that Heaven bestows
To alleviate human woes,
When the wearied heart despairs
Of a respite from its cares;
These and every true delight
Flourish only in thy sight;
And the sister graces three
Owe, themselves, their youth to thee
Without whom we may possess
Much, but never happiness.

ON INVALIDS.

Far happier are the dead, methinks, than they
Who look for death, and fear it every day.

ON THE ASTROLOGERS.

The astrologers did all alike presage
My uncle's dying in extreme old age;
One only disagreed. But he was wise,
And spoke not till he heard the funeral cries.

ON AN OLD WOMAN.

Mychla dyes her locks, 'tis said:
But 'tis a foul aspersion;
She buys them black; they therefore need
No subsequent immersion.

ON FLATTERERS.

No mischief worthier of our fear
In nature can be found
Than friendship, in ostent sincere,
But hollow and unsound.
For lull'd into a dangerous dream
We close infold a foe,
Who strikes, when most secure we seem,
The inevitable blow.

ON A TRUE FRIEND.

Hast thou a friend? thou hast indeed
A rich and large supply,
Treasure to serve your every need,
Well managed, till you die.

ON THE SWALLOW.

Attic maid! with honey fed,
Bear'st thou to thy callow brood
Yonder locust from the mead,
Destined their delicious food?

Ye have kindred voices clear,
Ye alike unfold the wing,
Migrate hither, sojourn here,
Both attendant on the spring!

Ah, for pity drop the prize;
Let it not with truth be said
That a songster gasps and dies,
That a songster may be fed.

ON LATE ACQUIRED WEALTH.

Poor in my youth, and in life's later scenes
Rich to no end, I curse my natal hour,
Who nought enjoy'd while young, denied the means; [power.
And nought when old enjoy'd, denied the

ON A BATH, BY PLATO.

Did Cytherea to the skies
From this pellucid lymph arise?
Or was it Cytherea's touch,
When bathing here, that made it such?

ON A FOWLER, BY ISIDORUS.

With seeds and birdlime, from the desert air,
Eumelus gather'd free, though scanty fare.
No lordly patron's hand he deign'd to kiss
Nor luxury knew, save liberty, nor bliss.
Thrice thirty years he lived, and to his heirs
His seeds bequeath'd, his birdlime, and his snares.

ON NIOBE.

Charon! receive a family on board,
Itself sufficient for thy crazy yawl,
Apollo and Diana, for a word
By me too proudly spoken, slew us all.

ON A GOOD MAN.

Traveller, regret not me; for thou shalt find
Just cause of sorrow none in my decease,
Who, dying, children's children left behind,
And with one wife lived many a year in peace:
Three virtuous youths espoused my daughters three,
And oft their infants in my bosom lay,
Nor saw I one of all derived from me,
Touch'd with disease, or torn by death away.
Their duteous hands my funeral rites bestow'd,
And me, by blameless manners fitted well
To seek it, sent to the serene abode
Where shades of pious men forever dwell.

ON A MISER.

They call thee rich—I deem thee poor,
Since, if thou darest not use thy store,
But savest it only for thine heirs,
The treasure is not thine, but theirs.

ANOTHER.

A miser traversing his house,
Espied, unusual there, a mouse,
And thus his uninvited guest
Briskly inquisitive address'd:
"Tell me, my dear, to what cause is it
I owe this unexpected visit?"
The mouse her host obliquely eyed,
And, smiling, pleasantly replied:
"Fear not, good fellow, for your hoard!
I come to lodge, and not to board."

ANOTHER.

Art thou some individual of a kind
Long-lived by nature as the rook or hind?
Heap treasure, then, for if thy need be such,
Thou hast excuse, and scarce canst heap too much. [breast
But man thou seem'st, clear therefore from thy
This lust of treasure—folly at the best!
For why shouldst thou go wasted to the tomb,
To fatten with thy spoils thou know'st not whom?

ON FEMALE INCONSTANCY.

Rich, thou hadst many lovers—poor, hast none,
So surely want extinguishes the flame,
And she who call'd thee once her pretty one,
And her Adonis, now inquires thy name.

Where wast thou born, Socierates, and where,
In what strange country can thy parents live,
Who seem'st, by thy complaints, not yet aware
That want's a crime no woman can forgive?

ON THE GRASSHOPPER.

Happy songster, perch'd above,
On the summit of the grove,
Whom a dewdrop cheers to sing
With the freedom of a king,
From thy perch survey the fields
Where prolific nature yields
Nought that, willingly as she,
Man surrenders not to thee.
For hostility or hate
None thy pleasures can create.
Thee it satisfies to sing
Sweetly the return of spring,
Herald of the genial hours,
Harming neither herbs nor flowers.
Therefore man thy voice attends
Gladly—thou and he are friends;
Nor thy never-ceasing strains,
Phœbus or the muse disdains
As too simple or too long,
For themselves inspire the song.
Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
Ever singing, sporting, playing
What has nature else to show
Godlike in its kind as thou?

ON HERMOCRATIA.

Hermocratia named—save only one—
Twice fifteen births I bore, and buried none;
For neither Phœbus pierced my thriving joys,
Nor Dian—she my girls, or he my boys.
But Dian rather, when my daughters lay
In parturition, chased their pangs away.
And all my sons, by Phœbus' bounty, shared
A vigorous youth, by sickness unimpair'd.
O Niobe! far less prolific! see
Thy boast against Latona shamed by me!

FROM MENANDER.

Fond youth! who dream'st that hoarded gold
Is needful not alone to pay
For all thy various items sold,
To serve the wants of every day;

Bread, vinegar, and oil, and meat,
For savory viands season'd high;
But somewhat more important yet—
I tell thee what it cannot buy.

No treasure hadst thou more amass'd
Than fame to Tantalus assign'd,
Would save thee from a tomb at last,
But thou must leave it all behind.

I give thee, therefore, counsel wise;
Confide not vainly in thy store,
However large—much less despise
Others comparatively poor;

But in thy more exalted state
A just and equal temper show
That all who see thee rich and great,
May deem thee worthy to be so.

ON PALLAS BATHING, FROM A HYMN OF CALLIMACHUS.

Nor oils of balmy scent produce,
Nor mirror for Minerva's use,
Ye nymphs who lave her; she, array'd
In genuine beauty, scorns their aid.
Not even when they left the skies,
To seek on Ida's head the prize
From Paris' hand, did Juno deign,
Or Pallas in the crystal plain
Of Simois' stream her locks to trace,
Or in the mirror's polished face,
Though Venus oft with anxious care
Adjusted twice a single hair.

TO DEMOSTHENES.

It flatters and deceives thy view,
This mirror of ill-polish'd ore;
For, were it just, and told thee true,
Thou wouldst consult it never more.

ON A SIMILAR CHARACTER.

You give your cheeks a rosy stain,
With washes dye your hair;
But paint and washes both are vain
To give a youthful air.

Those wrinkles mock your daily toil,
No labor will efface 'em,
You wear a mask of smoothest oil,
Yet still with ease we trace 'em.

An art so fruitless then forsake,
Which though you much excel in,
You never can contrive to make
Old Hecuba young Helen.

ON AN UGLY FELLOW.

Beware, my friend! of crystal brook,
Or fountain, lest that hideous hook,
Thy nose, thou chance to see;
Narcissus' fate would then be thine,
And self-detested thou wouldst pine,
As self-enamour'd he.

ON A BATTERED BEAUTY.

Hair, wax, rouge, honey, teeth you buy,
A multifarious store!
A mask at once would all supply
Nor would it cost you more.

ON A THIEF.

When Aulus, the nocturnal thief, made prize
Of Hermes, swift-wing'd envoy of the skies,
Hermes, Arcadia's king, the thief divine,
Who when an infant stole Apollo's kine,
And whom, as arbiter and overseer
Of our gymnastic sports, we planted here;
"Hermes," he cried, "you meet no new disaster;
Ofttimes the pupil goes beyond the master."

ON PEDIGREE.

FROM EPICHARMUS.

My mother! if thou love me, name no more
My noble birth! Sounding at every breath
My noble birth, thou kill'st me. Thither fly,
As to their only refuge, all from whom
Nature withholds all good besides; they boast
Their noble birth, conduct us to the tombs
Of their forefathers, and, from age to age
Ascending, trumpet their illustrious race:
But whom hast thou beheld, or canst thou name,
Derived from no forefathers? Such a man
Lives not; for how could such be born at all?
And, if it chance that, native of a land
Far distant, or in infancy deprived
Of all his kindred, one, who cannot trace
His origin, exist, why deem him sprung
From baser ancestry than theirs who can?
My mother! he whom nature at his birth
Endow'd with virtuous qualities, although
An Æthiop and a slave, is nobly born.

ON ENVY.

Pity, says the Theban bard,
From my wishes I discard;
Envy, let me rather be,
Rather far, a theme for thee.
Pity to distress is shown,
Envy to the great alone—
So the Theban—But to shine
Less conspicuous be mine!
I prefer the golden mean,
Pomp and penury between;
For alarm and peril wait
Ever on the loftiest state
And the lowest to the end
Obloquy and scorn attend.

BY MOSCHUS.

I slept when Venus enter'd: to my bed
A Cupid in her beauteous hand she led,
A bashful seeming boy, and thus she said:
"Shepherd, receive my little one! I bring
An untaught love, whom thou must teach to sing."
She said, and left him. I, suspecting nought,
Many a sweet strain my subtle pupil taught,
How reed to reed Pan first with osier bound,
How Pallas form'd the pipe of softest sound,
How Hermes gave the lute, and how the quire
Of Phœbus owe to Phœbus' self the lyre. [he,
Such were my themes; my themes nought heeded
But ditties sang of amorous sort to me.
The pangs that mortals and immortals prove
From Venus' influence and the darts of love.
Thus was the teacher by the pupil taught;
His lessons I retain'd, he mine forgot.

BY PHILEMON.

Oft we enhance our ills by discontent,
And give them bulk beyond what nature meant.
A parent, brother, friend deceased, to cry—
"He's dead indeed, but he was born to die"—
Such temperate grief is suited to the size
And burden of the loss; is just and wise.
But to exclaim, "Ah! wherefore was I born,
Thus to be left forever thus forlorn?"
Who thus laments his loss invites distress,
And magnifies a woe that might be less,
Through dull despondence to his lot resign'd,
And leaving reason's remedy behind.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FABLES OF GAY.

LEPUS MULTIS AMICUS.

Lusus amicitia est, uni nisi dedita, ceu fit,
  Simplice ni nexus fœdere, lusus amor.
Incerto genitore puer, non sæpe paternæ
  Tutamen novit, deliciasque domûs:
Quique sibi fidos fore multos sperat, amicus
  Mirua est huic misero si ferat ullus opem.
Comis erat, mitisque, et nolle et velle paratus
  Cum quovis, Gaü more modoque, Lepus.
Ille, quot in sylvis et quot spatiantur in agris
  Quadrupedes, nôrat conciliare sibi;
Et quisque innocuo, invitoque lacessere quenquam
  Labra tenus saltem fidus amicus erat.
Ortum sub lucis dum pressa cubilia linquit,
  Rorantes herbas, pabula sueta, petens,
Venatorum audit clangores ponè sequentem,
  Fulmineumque sonum territus errø fugit.
Corda pavor pulsat, sursum sedet, erigit aures,
  Respicit, et sentit jam prope adesse necem.
Utque canes fallat latè circumvagus, illuc,
  Unde abüt, unrâ callilitate redit;
Viribus at fractis tandem se projicit ultro
  In mediâ miserum semianimemque viâ.
Vix ibi stratus, equi sonitum pedis audit, et, oh spe
  Quam lætâ adventu cor agitatur equi!
Dorsum (inquit) mihi, chare, tuum concede, tuoque
  Auxilio nares fallere, vimque canum.
Me meus, ut nosti, pes prodit—fidus amicus
  Fert quodcunque, lubens, nec grave sentit, onus.
Belle, miselle lepuscule, (equus respondet) amara
  Omnia quæ tibi sunt, sunt et amara mihi.
Verum age—sume animos—multi, me pone, bonique
  Adveniunt, quorum sis citò salvus ope.
Proximus armenti dominus bos solicitatus
  Auxilium his verbis se dare posse negat:
Quando quadrupedum, quot vivunt, nullus amicum
  Me nescire potest usque fuisse tibi,
Libertate æquus, quam cedit amicus amico,
  Utar, et absque metu ne tibi displiceam;

Hinc me mandat amor. Juxta istum messis acervum
Me mea, præ cunctis chara, juvenca manet;
Et quis non ultro quæcunque negotia linquit,
Parcat ut dominæ cum vocat ipsa suæ?
Nec me crudelem dicas—discedo—sed hircus,
Cujus ope effugias integer, hircus adest.
Febrem (ait hircus) habes. Heu, sicca ut lumina languent!
Utque caput, collo deficiente, jacet!
Hirsutum mihi tergum; et forsan læserit ægrum,
Vellere eris melius fultus, ovisque venit.
Me mihi fecit onus natura, ovis inquit, anhelans
Sustineo lanæ pondera tanta meæ;
Me nec velocem nec fortem jacto, solentque
Nos etiam sævi dilacerare canes.
Ultimus accedit vitulus, vitulumque precatur,
Ut periturum alias ocyus eripiat.
Remne ergo, respondet vitulus, suscepero tantam,
Non depulsus adhuc ubere, natus heri?
Te, quem maturi canibus validique relinquunt,
Incolumem potero reddere parvus ego?
Præterea tollens quem illi aversantur, amicis
Forte parum videar consuluisse meis.
Ignoscas oro. Fidissima dissociantur
Corda, et tale tibi sat liquet esse meum.
Ecce autem ad calces canis est! te quanta perempto
Tristitia est nobis ingruitura!—Vale!

AVARUS ET PLUTUS.

Icta fenestra Euri flatu stridebat, avarus
Ex somno trepidus surgit, opumque memor.
Lata silenter humi ponit vestigia, quemque
Respicit ad sonitum, respiciensque tremit;
Angustissima quæque foramina lampade visit,
Ad vectes, obices, fertque refertque manum.
Dein reserat crebris junctam compagibus arcam
Exultansque omnes conspicit intus opes.
Sed tandem furiis ultricibus actus ob artes
Queis sua res tenuis creverat in cumulum.
Contortis manibus nunc stat, nunc pectora pulsans
Aurum execratur, perniciemque vocat;
O mihi, ait, misero mens quam tranquilla fuisset,
Hoc celasset adhuc si modo terra malum!
Nunc autem virtus ipsa est venalis; et aurum
Quid contra vitii tormina sæva valet?
O inimicum aurum? O homini infestissima pestis;
Cui datur illecebras vincere posse tuas?
Aurum homines suasit contemnere quicquid honestum est,
Et præter nomen nil retinere boni.
Aurum cuncta mali per terras semina sparsit;
Aurum nocturnis furibus arma dedit.
Bella docet fortes, timidosque ad pessima ducit,
Fœdifragas artes, multiplicesque dolos.
Nec vitii quicquam est, quod non inveneris ortum
Ex malesuadâ auri sacrilegâque fame.
Dixit, et ingemuit; Plutusque suum sibi numen
Ante oculos, irâ fervidus, ipse stetit.
Aream clausit avarus, et ora horrentia rugis
Ostendens; tremulum sic Deus increpuit.
Questibus his raucis mihi cur, stulte, obstrepis aures?
Ista tui similis tristia quisque canit.
Commaculavi egone humanum genus, improbe? Culpa,
Dum rapis, et captas omnia, culpa tua est.
Mene execrandum censes, quia tam pretiosa
Criminibus fiunt perniciosa tuis?
Virtutis specie, pulchro ceu pallio amictus
Quisque catus nebulo sordida facta tegit.
Atque suis manibus commissa potentia, durum
Et dirum subito vergit ad imperium.
Hinc, nimium dum latro aurum detrudit in aream.
Idem aurum latet in pectore pestis edax.
Nutrit avaritiam et fastum, suspendere adunco
Suadet naso inopes, et vitium omne docet.
Auri et larga probo si copia contigit, instar
Roris dilapsi ex æthere cuncta beat:
Tum, quasi numen inesset, alit, fovet, educat orbos,
Et viduas lacrymis ora rigare vetat.
Quo sua crimina jure auro derivet avarus,
Aurum animæ pretium qui cupit atque capit?
Lege pari gladium incuset sicarius atrox
Cæso homine, et ferrum judicet esse reum.

PAPILIO ET LIMAX.

Qui subito ex imis rerum in fastigia surgit,
Nativas sordes, quicquid agatur, olet.

EPIGRAMS TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF OWEN.

ON ONE IGNORANT AND ARROGANT.

Thou mayst of double ignorance boast,
Who know'st not that thou nothing know'st.

PRUDENT SIMPLICITY.

That thou mayst injure no man, dove-like be,
And serpent-like, that none may injure thee!

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.

Contemplate, when the sun declines,
Thy death with deep reflection!
And when again he rising shines,
The day of resurrection!

TO A FRIEND IN DISTRESS.

I wish thy lot, now bad, still worse, my friend;
For when at worst, they say, things always mend.

RETALIATION.

The works of ancient bards divine,
Aulus, thou scorn'st to read;
And should posterity read thine,
It would be strange indeed!

When little more than boy in age,
I deem'd myself almost a sage:
But now seem worthier to be styled,
For ignorance, almost a child.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

VIRGIL, OVID, HORACE, AND HOMER.

THE SALAD, BY VIRGIL.

The winter night now well nigh worn away
The wakeful cock proclaim'd approaching day,
When Simulus, poor tenant of a farm
Of narrowest limits, heard the shrill alarm,
Yawn'd, stretch'd his limbs, and anxious to provide
Against the pangs of hunger unsupplied,
By slow degrees his tatter'd bed forsook,
And, poking in the dark, explored the nook
Where embers slept with ashes heap'd around,
And with burnt fingers' ends the treasure found.
It chanced that from a brand beneath his nose,
Sure proof of latent fire some smoke arose;
When, trimming with a pin the encrusted tow,
And stooping it towards the coals below,
He toils with cheeks distended, to excite
The lingering flame, and gains at length a light.
With prudent heed he spreads his hand before
The quivering lamp, and opes his granary door.
Small was his stock, but taken for the day
A measured stint of twice eight pounds away,
With these his mill he seeks. A shelf at hand,
Fix'd in the wall, affords his lamp a stand:
Then baring both his arms—a sleeveless coat
He girds, the rough exuviæ of a goat:
And with a rubber, for that use design'd,
Cleansing his mill within—begins to grind;
Each hand has its employ; laboring amain,
This turns the winch, while that supplies the grain.
The stone, revolving rapidly, now glows,
And the bruised corn a mealy current flows;
While he, to make his heavy labor light,
Tasks oft his left hand to relieve his right;
And chants with rudest accent, to beguile
His ceaseless toil, as rude a strain the while.
And now, "Dame Cybale, come forth!" he cries;
But Cybale, still slumbering, nought replies.
From Atric she, the swain's sole serving-maid,
Whose face and form alike her birth betray'd.
With woolly locks, lips tumid, sable skin,
Wide bosom, udders flaccid, belly thin,
Legs slender, broad and most misshapen feet,
Chapp'd into chinks, and parch'd with solar heat.
Such, summon'd oft, she came; at his command
Fresh fuel heap'd, the sleeping embers fann'd,
And made in haste her simmering skillet steam,
Replenish'd newly from the neighboring stream.
The labors of the mill perform'd, a sieve
The mingled flour and bran must next receive,
Which shaken oft shoots Ceres through refined,
And better dress'd, her husks all left behind.
This done, at once his future plain repast
Unleaven'd on a shaven board he cast,
With tepid lymph first largely soak'd it all,
Then gather'd it with both hands to a ball,
And spreading it again with both hands wide,
With sprinkled salt the stiffen'd mass supplied;
At length the stubborn substance, duly wrought,
Takes from his palms impress'd the shape it ought,
Becomes an orb—and quarter'd into shares,
The faithful mark of just division bears.
Last, on his hearth it finds convenient space,
For Cybale before had swept the place,
And there, with tiles and embers overspread,
She leaves it—reeking in its sultry bed.
Nor Simulus, while Vulcan thus alone
His part perform'd, proves heedless of his own,
But sedulous, not merely to subdue
His hunger, but to please his palate too,
Prepares more savory food. His chimney side
Could boast no gammon, salted well and dried
And hook'd behind him; but sufficient store
Of bundled anise and a cheese it bore; [strung
A broad round cheese, which, through its centre
With a tough broom twig, in the corner hung;
The prudent hero, therefore, with address
And quick despatch, now seeks another mess.
Close to his cottage lay a garden ground,
With reeds and osiers sparely girt around;
Small was the spot, but liberal to produce,
Nor wanted aught to serve a peasant's use;
And sometimes e'en the rich would borrow thence,
Although its tillage was its sole expense.
For oft as from his toils abroad he ceased,
Home-bound by weather, or some stated feast,
His debt of culture here he duly paid,
And only left the plough to wield the spade.
He knew to give each plant the soil it needs,
To drill the ground and cover close the seeds;
And could with ease compel the wanton rill
To turn and wind obedient to his will. [beet,
There flourish'd star-wort, and the branching
The sorrel acid, and the mallow sweet
The skirret, and the leek's aspiring kind,
The noxious poppy—quencher of the mind!
Salubrious sequel of a sumptuous board,
The lettuce, and the long huge-bellied gourd;
But these (for none his appetite controll'd
With stricter sway) the thrifty rustic sold;
With broom twigs neatly bound, each kind apart,
He bore them ever to the public mart:
Whence laden still, but with a lighter load,
Of cash well earn'd, he took his homeward road,

Expending seldom, ere he quitted Rome,
His gains in flesh ment for a feast at home.
There, at no cost, on onions, rank and red,
Or the curl'd endive's bitter leaf, he fed:
On scallions sliced, or, with a sensual gust,
On rockets—foul provocatives of lust!
Nor ever shunn'd with smarting gums to press
Nasturtium—pungent face-distorting mess!
Some such regale now also in his thought,
With hasty steps his garden ground he sought;
There, delving with his hands he first displaced
Four plants of garlick, large, and rooted fast;
The tender tops of parsley next he culls,
Then the old rue bush shudders as he pulls;
And corinnder last to these succeeds. [seeds.
That hangs on slightest threads her trembling
Placed near his sprightly fire, he now demands
The mortar at his sable servant's hands;
When, stripping all his garlick first, he tore
The exterior coats, and cast them on the floor,
Then cast away with like contempt the skin,
Flimsier concealment of the cloves within.
These, search'd, and perfect found, he one by one
Rinsed and disposed within the hollow stone.
Salt added, and a lump of salted cheese,
With his injected herbs he cover'd these,
And, tucking with his left his tunic tight,
And seizing fast the pestle with his right,
The garlick bruising first he soon express'd,
And mixed the various juices of the rest.
He grinds and by degrees his herbs below,
Lost in each other, their own powers forego,
And with the cheese in compound to the sight
Nor wholly green appear nor wholly white.
His nostrils oft the forceful fume resent,
He cursed full oft his dinner for its scent;
Or, with wry faces, wiping as he spoke
The trickling tears, cried, "Vengeance on the smoke!"
The work proceeds: not roughly turns he now
The pestle, but in circles smooth and slow;
With cautious hand, that grudges what it spills,
Some drops of olive oil he next instils,
Then vinegar with caution scarcely less,
And gathering to a ball the medley mess,
Last, with two fingers frugally applied,
Sweeps the small remnant from the mortar's side.
And, thus complete in figure and in kind,
Obtains at length the salad he design'd.
And now black Cybale before him stands,
The cake drawn newly glowing in her hands,
He glads receives it, chasing far away
All fears of famine for the passing day;
His legs enclosed in buskins, and his head
In its tough casque of leather, forth he led
And yoked his steers, a dull obedient pair,
Then drove afield, and plunged the pointed share.

June, 1799.

TRANSLATION FROM VIRGIL.

ÆNEID, BOOK VIII. LINE 18.

Thus Italy was moved—nor did the chief
Æneas in his mind less tumult feel.
On every side his anxious thought he turns,
Restless, unfix'd, not knowing which to choose.
And as a cistern that in brim of brass
Confines the crystal flood, if chance the sun
Smite on it, or the moon's resplendent orb,
The quivering light now flashes on the walls,
Now leaps uncertain to the vaulted roof:
Such were the wavering motions of his mind.
'Twas night—and weary nature sunk to rest.
The birds, the bleating flocks, were heard no more.
At length, on the cold ground, beneath the damp
And dewy vault fast by the river's brink,
The father of his country sought repose.
When lo! among the spreading poplar boughs,
Forth from his pleasant stream, propitious rose
The god of Tiber: clear transparent gauze
Infolds his loins, his brows with reeds are crown'd:
And these his gracious words to soothe his care:
"Heaven-born, who bring'st our kindred home again,
Rescued, and givest eternity to Troy,
Long have Laurentum and the Latian plains
Expected thee; behold thy fix'd abode.
Fear not the threats of war, the storm is past,
The gods appeased. For proof that what thou hear'st
Is no vain forgery or delusive dream,
Beneath the grove that borders my green bank,
A milk-white swine, with thirty milk-white young,
Shall greet thy wondering eyes. Mark well the place;
For 'tis thy place of rest, there end thy toils:
There, twice ten years elapsed, fair Alba's walls
Shall rise, fair Alba, by Ascanius' hand.
Thus shall it be—now listen, while I teach
The means to accomplish these events at hand.
The Arcadians here, a race from Pallas sprung,
Following Evander's standard and his fate,
High on these mountains, a well chosen spot,
Have built a city, for their grandsire's sake
Named Pallanteum. These perpetual war
Wage with the Latians: join'd in faithful league
And arms confederate, add them to your camp.
Myself between my winding banks will speed
Your well oar'd barks to stem the opposing tide.
Rise, goddess born, arise; and with the first
Declining stars seek Juno in thy prayer,
And vanquish all her wrath with suppliant vows.
When conquest crowns thee, then remember me.
I am the Tiber, whose cærulean stream
Heaven favors; I with copious flood divide
These grassy banks, and cleave the fruitful meads.
My mansion, this—and lofty cities crown
My fountain head."—He spoke and sought the deep,
And plunged his form beneath the closing flood.
Æneas at the morning dawn awoke,
And, rising, with uplifted eye beheld
The orient sun, then dipped his palms, and scoop'd
The brimming stream, and thus address'd the skies:
"Ye nymphs, Laurentian nymphs, who feed the source
Of many a stream, and thou, with thy blest flood,
O Tiber, hear, accept me, and afford,
At length afford, a shelter from my woes.
Where'er in secret cavern under ground
Thy waters sleep, where'er they spring to light,
Since thou hast pity for a wretch like me,
My offerings and my vows shall wait thee still:
Great horned Father of Hesperian floods,
Be gracious now, and ratify thy word."
He said, and chose two galleys from his fleet,
Fits them with oars, and clothes the crew in arms.

When lo! astonishing and pleasing sight,
The milk-white dam, with her unspotted brood,
Lay stretch'd upon the bank, beneath the grove.
To thee, the pious Prince, Juno, to thee
Devotes them all, all on thine altar bleed.
That live-long night old Tiber smooth'd his flood,
And so restrain'd it that it seem'd to stand
Motionless as a pool, or silent lake,
That not a billow might resist their oars.
With cheerful sound of exhortation soon
Their voyage they begin; the pitchy keel
Slides through the gentle deep, the quiet stream
Admires the unwonted burden that it bears,
Well polish'd arms, and vessels painted gay.
Beneath the shade of various trees, between
The umbrageous branches of the spreading groves,
They cut their liquid way, nor day nor night
They slack their course, unwinding as they go
The long meanders of the peaceful tide.
The glowing sun was in meridian height,
When from afar they saw the humble walls,
And the few scatter'd cottages, which now
The Roman power has equall'd with the clouds;
But such was then Evander's scant domain.
They steer to shore, and hasten to the town.
It chanced the Arcadian monarch on that day,
Before the walls, beneath a shady grove,
Was celebrating high, in solemn feast,
Alcides and his tutelary gods.
Pallas, his son, was there, and there the chief
Of all his youth; with these, a worthy tribe,
His poor but venerable senate, burnt [blood.
Sweet incense, and their altars smoked with
Soon as they saw the towering masts approach,
Sliding between the trees, while the crew rest
Upon their silent oars, amazed they rose,
Not without fear, and all forsook the feast.
But Pallas undismay'd, his javelin seized,
Rush'd to the bank, and from a rising ground
Forbade them to disturb the sacred rites.
"Ye stranger youth! What prompts you to explore
This untried way? and whither do ye steer?
Whence, and who are ye? Bring ye peace or war?"
Æneas from his lofty deck holds forth
The peaceful olive branch, and thus replies:
"Trojans and enemies to the Latian state,
Whom they with unprovoked hostilities [der—
Have driven away, thou seest. We seek Evan-
Say this—and say beside, the Trojan chiefs
Are come, and seek his friendship and his aid."
Pallas with wonder heard that awful name,
And "Whosoe'er thou art," he cried, "come forth:
Bear thine own tidings to my father's car,
And be a welcome guest beneath our roof."
He said, and press'd the stranger to his breast:
Then led him from the river to the grove,
Where, courteous, thus Æneas greets the king:
"Best of the Grecian race, to whom I bow
(So wills my fortune) suppliant, and stretch forth
In sign of amity this peaceful branch,
I fear'd thee not, although I knew thee well
A Grecian leader, born in Arcady,
And kinsman of the Atridæ. Me my virtue,
That means no wrong to thee—the Oracles,
Our kindred families allied of old,
And thy renown diffused through every land,
Have all conspired to bind in friendship to thee,
And send me not unwilling to thy shores.
Dardanus, author of the Trojan state,
(So say the Greeks,) was fair Electra's son;
Electra boasted Atlas for her sire,
Whose shoulders high sustain the ethereal orbs.
Your sire is Mercury, whom Maia bore,
Sweet Maia, on Cylene's hoary top.
Her, if we credit aught tradition old,
Atlas of yore, the self-same Atlas, claim'd
His daughter. Thus united close in blood,
Thy race and ours one common sire confess.
With these credentials fraught, I would not send
Ambassadors with artful phrase to sound
And win thee by degrees—but came myself—
Me, therefore, me thou seest; my life the stake:
'Tis I, Æneas, who implore thine aid.
Should Daunia, that now aims the blow at thee,
Prevail to conquer us, nought then, they think,
Will hinder, but Hesperia must be theirs,
All theirs, from the upper to the nether sea.
Take then our friendship, and return us thine.
We too have courage, we have noble minds,
And youth well tried, and exercised in arms."
Thus spoke Æneas.—He with fix'd regard
Survey'd him speaking, features, form, and mien.
Then briefly thus—"Thou noblest of thy name,
How gladly do I take thee to my heart,
How gladly thus confess thee for a friend!
In thee I trace Anchises; his thy speech,
Thy voice, thy countenance. For I well remember
Many a day since, when Priam journey'd forth
To Salamis, to see the land where dwelt
Hesione, his sister, he push'd on
E'en to Arcadia's frozen bounds. 'Twas then
The bloom of youth was glowing on my cheek;
Much I admired the Trojan chiefs, and much
Their king, the son of great Laomedon,
But most Anchises, towering o'er them all.
A youthful longing seized me to accost
The hero, and embrace him; I drew near,
And gladly led him to the walls of Pheneus.
Departing, he distintinguis'd me with gifts,
A costly quiver stored with Lycian darts,
A robe inwove with gold, with gold imboss'd
Two bridles, those which Pallas uses now.
The friendly league thou hast solicited
I give thee, therefore, and to-morrow all
My chosen youth shall wait on your return.
Meanwhile, since thus in friendship ye are come,
Rejoice with us, and join to celebrate
These annual rites, which may not be delay'd,
And be at once familiar at our board."
He said, and bade replace the feast removed;
Himself upon a grassy bank disposed
The crew; but for Æneas order'd forth
A couch spread with a lion's tawny shag,
And bade him share the honors of his throne.
The appointed youth with glad alacrity
Assist the laboring priest to load the board
With roasted entrails of the slaughter'd beeves,
Well kneaded bread and mantling bowls. Well pleased,
Æneas and the Trojan youth regale
On the huge length of a well pastured chine.
Hunger appeased, and tables all despatch'd,
Thus spake Evander: "Superstition here,
In this old solemn feasting, has no part.
No, Trojan friend, from utmost danger saved,
In gratitude this worship we renew.
Behold that rock which nods above the vale,
Those bulks of broken stone dispersed around,
How desolate the shatter'd cave appears,
And what a ruin spreads the incumber'd plain.
Within this pile, but far within, was once

The den of Cacus; dire his hateful form
That shunn'd the day, half monster and half man.
Blood newly shed stream'd ever on the ground
Smoking, and many a visage pale and wan
Nail'd at his gate, hung hideous to the sight.
Vulcan begot the brute: vast was his size,
And from his throat he belch'd his father's fires.
But the day came that brought us what we wish'd,
The assistance and the presence of a God.
Flush'd with his victory, and the spoils he won
From triple-form'd Geryon lately slain,
The great avenger, Hercules, appear'd.
Hither he drove his stately bulls, and pour'd
His herds along the vale. But the sly thief
Cacus, that nothing might escape his hand
Of villainy or fraud, drove from the stalls
Four of the lordliest of his bulls, and four
The fairest of his heifers: by the tail
He dragg'd them to his den, that, there conceal'd,
No footsteps might betray the dark abode.
And now, his herd with provender sufficed,
Alcides would be gone: they as they went
Still bellowing loud, made the deep echoing woods
And distant hills resound: when, hark! one ox,
Imprison'd close within the vast recess,
Lows in return, and frustrates all his hope.
Then fury seized Alcides, and his breast
With indignation heaved; grasping his club
Of knotted oak, swift to the mountain top
He ran, he flew. Then first was Cacus seen
To tremble, and his eyes bespoke his fears.
Swift as an eastern blast, he sought his den,
And dread, increasing, wing'd him as he went.
Drawn up in iron slings above the gate,
A rock was hung enormous. Such his haste,
He burst the chains, and dropp'd it at the door,
Then grappled it with iron work within
Of bolts and bars by Vulcan's art contrived.
Scarce was he fast, when, panting for revenge,
Came Hercules; he gnash'd his teeth with rage,
And quick as lightning glanced his eyes around
In quest of entrance. Fiery red and stung
With indignation, thrice he wheel'd his course
About the mountain; thrice, but thrice in vain,
He strove to force the quarry at the gate,
And thrice sat down, o'erwearied in the vale.
There stood a pointed rock abrupt and rude,
That high o'erlook'd the rest, close at the back
Of the fell monster's den, where birds obscene
Of ominous note resorted, choughs and daws.
This, as it lean'd obliquely to the left,
Threatening the stream below, he from the right
Push'd with his utmost strength, and to and fro
He shook the mass, loosening its lowest base;
Then shoved it from its seat; down fell the pile;
Sky thunder'd at the fall; the banks give way,
The affrighted stream flows upward to his source,
Behold the kennel of the brute exposed,
The gloomy vault laid open. So, if chance
Earth yawning to the centre should disclose
The mansions, the pale mansions of the dead,
Loathed by the gods, such would the gulf appear,
And the ghosts tremble at the sight of day.
The monster braying with unusual din
Within his hollow lair, and sore amazed
To see such sudden inroads of the light,
Alcides press'd him close with what at hand
Lay readiest, stumps of trees, and fragments huge
Of millstone size. He, (for escape was none),
Wondrous to tell! forth from his gorge discharged
A smoky cloud that darken'd all the den;
Wreath after wreath he vomited amain,
The smothering vapor mix'd with fiery sparks.
No sight could penetrate the veil obscure.
The hero, more provoked, endured not this,
But with a headlong leap he rush'd to where
The thickest cloud enveloped his abode.
There grasp'd he Cacus, spite of all his fires,
Till, crush'd within his arms, the monster shows
His bloodless throat, now dry with panting hard,
And his press'd eyeballs start. Soon he tears down
The barricade of rock, the dark abyss
Lies open; and the imprison'd bulls, the theft
He had with oaths denied, are brought to light;
By the heels the miscreant carcass is dragg'd forth,
His face, his eyes, all terrible, his breast
Beset with bristles, and his sooty jaws
Are view'd with wonder never to be cloy'd.
Hence the celebrity thou seest, and hence
This festal day Potitius first enjoin'd
Posterity: these solemn rites he first.
With those who bear the great Pinarian name,
To Hercules devoted; in the grove
This altar built, deem'd sacred in the highest
By us, and sacred ever to be deem'd.
Come, then, my friends, and bind your youthful brows
In praise of such deliverance, and hold forth
The brimming cup; your deities and ours
Are now the same, then drink, and freely too."
So saying, he twisted round his reverend locks
A variegated poplar wreath, and fill'd
His right hand with a consecrated bowl.
At once all pour libations on the board,
All offer prayer. And now, the radiant sphere
Of day descending, eventide drew near.
When first Potitius with the priests advanced,
Begirt with skins, and torches in their hands.
High piled with meats of savory taste, they ranged
The chargers, and renew'd the grateful feast.
Then came the Salii, crown'd with poplar too,
Circling the blazing altars; here the youth
Advanced, a choir harmonious, there were heard
The reverend seers responsive; praise they sung,
Much praise in honor of Alcides' deeds;
How first with infant gripe two serpents huge
He strangled, sent from Juno; next they sung,
How Troja and Œchalia he destroy'd,
Fair cities both, and many a toilsome task
Beneath Eurystheus (so his stepdame will'd)
Achieved victorious. Thou, the cloud-born pair,
Hylæus fierce and Pholus, monstrous twins,
Thou slew'st the minotaur, the plague of Crete,
And the vast lion of the Nemean rock,
Thee hell, and Cerberus, hell's porter, fear'd,
Stretch'd in his den upon his half-gnaw'd bones.
Thee no abhorred form, not e'en the vast
Typhœus could appal, though clad in arms.
Hail, true-born son of Jove, among the gods
At length enroll'd, nor least illustrious thou,
Haste thee propitious and approve our songs.
Thus hymn'd the chorus; above all they sing
The cave of Cacus, and the flames he breathed.
The whole grove echoes, and the hills rebound.
The rites perform'd, all hasten to the town.
The king, bending with age, held as he went
Æneas and his Pallas by the hand,
With much variety of pleasing talk
Shortening the way. Æneas, with a smile,
Looks round him, charm'd with the delightful scene,
And many a question asks, and much he learns

Of heroes far renown'd in ancient times.
Then spake Evander. These extensive groves,
Were once inhabited by fauns and nymphs,
Produced beneath their shades, and a rude race
Of men, the progeny uncouth of elms
And knotted oaks. They no refinement knew
Of laws or manners civilized, to yoke
The steer, with forecast provident to store
The hoarded grain, or manage what they had,
But browsed like beasts upon the leafy boughs,
Or fed voracious on their hunted prey.
An exile from Olympus, and expell'd
His native realm by thunder-bearing Jove,
First Saturn came. He from the mountains drew
This herd of men untractable and fierce,
And gave them laws: and call'd his hiding-place,
This growth of forests, Latium. Such the peace
His land possess'd, the golden age was then,
So famed in story; till by slow degrees
Far other times, and of far different hue,
Succeeded, thirst of gold and thirst of blood.
Then came Ausonian bands, and armed hosts
From Sicily, and Latium often changed
Her master and her name. At length arose
Kings, of whom Tybris of gigantic form
Was chief: and we Italians since have call'd
The river by his name; thus Albula
(So was the country call'd in ancient days)
Was quite forgot. Me from my native land
An exile, through the dangerous ocean driven,
Resistless fortune and relentless fate
Placed where thou seest me. Phœbus, and
The nymph Carmentis, with maternal care
Attendant on my wanderings, fix'd me here.

[Ten lines omitted.]

He said, and show'd him the Tarpeian rock,
And the rude spot where now the Capitol
Stands all magnificent and bright with gold,
Then overgrown with thorns. And yet e'en then
The swains beheld that sacred scene with awe;
The grove, the rock, inspired religious fear.
This grove, he said, that crowns the lofty top
Of this fair hill, some deity, we know,
Inhabits, but what deity we doubt.
The Arcadians speak of Jupiter himself
That they have often seen him, shaking here
His gloomy Ægis, while the thunder storms
Came rolling all around him. Turn thine eyes,
Behold that ruin: those dismantled walls,
Where once two towns, Janiculum ——,
By Janus this, and that by Saturn built,
Saturnia. Such discourse brought them beneath
The roof of poor Evander; thence they saw,
Where now the proud and stately forum stands,
The grazing herds wide scatter'd o'er the field.
Soon as he enter'd—Hercules, he said,
Victorious Hercules, on this threshold trod,
These walls contain'd him, humble as they are.
Dare to despise magnificence, my friend,
Prove thy divine descent by worth divine,
Nor view with haughty scorn this mean abode.
So saying, he led Æneas by the hand,
And placed him on a cushion stuff'd with leaves,
Spread with the skin of a Lybistian bear.

[The Episode of Venus and Vulcan omitted.]

While thus in Lemnos Vulcan was employ'd,
Awaken'd by the gentle dawn of day,
And the shrill song of birds beneath the eaves
Of his low mansion, old Evander rose.
His tunic, and the sandals on his feet,
And his good sword well girded to his side,
A panther's skin dependent from his left,
And over his right shoulder thrown aslant,
Thus was he clad. Two mastiffs follow'd him,
His whole retinue and his nightly guard.

OVID, TRIST. BOOK V. ELEG. XII.

Scribis, ut oblectem.

You bid me write to amuse the tedious hours,
And save from withering my poetic powers;
Hard is the task, my friend, for verse should flow
From the free mind, not fetter'd down by woe;
Restless amidst unceasing tempests tost,
Whoe'er has cause for sorrow, I have most.
Would you bid Priam laugh, his sons all slain,
Or childless Niobe from tears refrain,
Join the gay dance, and lead the festive train?
Does grief or study most befit the mind
To this remote, this barbarous nook confined?
Could you impart to my unshaken breast
The fortitude by Socrates possess'd,
Soon would it sink beneath such woes as mine,
For what is human strength to wrath divine?
Wise as he was, and Heaven pronounced him so,
My sufferings would have laid that wisdom low.
Could I forget my country, thee and all,
And e'en the offence to which I owe my fall,
Yet fear alone would freeze that poet's vein,
While hostile troops swarm o'er the dreary plain.
Add that the fatal rust of long disuse
Unfits me for the service of the muse.
Thistles and weeds are all we can expect
From the best soil impoverish'd by neglect;
Unexercised, and to his stall confined,
The fleetest racer would be left behind;
The best built bark that cleaves the watery way,
Laid useless by, would moulder and decay—
No hope remains that time shall me restore
Mean as I was, to what I was before.
Think how a series of desponding cares
Benumbs the genius and its force impairs.
How oft, as now, on this devoted sheet,
My verse, constrain'd to move with measured feet,
Reluctant and laborious limps along,
And proves itself a wretched exile's song.
What is it tunes the most melodious lays?
'Tis emulation and the thirst of praise,
A noble thirst, and not unknown to me,
While smoothly wafted on a calmer sea.
But can a wretch like Ovid pant for fame?
No, rather let the world forget my name.
Is it because that world approved my strain,
You prompt me to the same pursuit again?
No, let the Nine the ungrateful truth excuse,
I charge my hopeless ruin on the muse,
And like Perillus, meet my just desert,
The victim of my own pernicious art:
Fool that I was to be so warn'd in vain,
And, shipwrecked once, to tempt the deep again.
Ill fares the bard in this unletter'd land,
None to consult, and none to understand.
The purest verse has no admirers here,
Their own rude language only suits their ear.
Rude as it is, at length familiar grown,
I learn it and almost unlearn my own—
Yet to say truth, e'en here the muse disdains
Confinement, and attempts her former strains,

But finds the strong desire is not the power,
And what her taste condemns the flames devour.
A part perhaps, like this, escapes the doom.
And though unworthy, finds a friend at Rome;
But oh! the cruel art that could undo
Its votary thus! would that could perish too!

HORACE, BOOK I. ODE IX.

Vides, ut altâ stet nive candidum
Soracte; . . . . . .

SEEST thou yon mountain laden with deep snow,
The groves beneath their fleecy burden bow,
The streams, congeal'd, forget to flow,
Come, thaw the cold and lay a cheerful pile
Of fuel on the hearth;
Broach the best cask and make old winter smile
With seasonable mirth.

This be our part—let Heaven dispose the rest;
If Jove command, the winds shall sleep,
That now wage war upon the foamy deep,
And gentle gales spring from the balmy west.

E'en let us shift to-morrow as we may,
When to-morrow's passed away,
We at least shall have to say,
We have lived another day;
Your auburn locks will soon be silver'd o'er,
Old age is at our heels, and youth returns no more.

HORACE, BOOK I. ODE XXXVIII.

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.

BOY, I hate their empty shows,
Persian garlands I detest,
Bring not me the late-blown rose,
Lingering after all the rest.
Plainer myrtle pleases me,
Thus outstretch'd beneath my vine;
Myrtle more becoming thee,
Waiting with thy master's wine.

HORACE, BOOK I. ODE XXXVIII.

BOY! I detest all Persian fopperies,
Fillet-bound garlands are to me disgusting;
Task not thyself with any search, I charge thee,
Where latest roses linger.
Bring me alone (for thou wilt find that readily)
Plain myrtle. Myrtle neither will disparage
Thee occupied to serve me, or me drinking
Beneath my vine's cool shelter.

HORACE, BOOK II. ODE X.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse fortune's power;
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep
Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of wintry blasts; the loftiest tower
Comes heaviest to the ground;
The bolts that spare the mountain's side
His cloudcapt eminence divide,
And spread the ruin round.

The well-inform'd philosopher,
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
And hopes in spite of pain;
If Winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast?
The dark appearance will not last;
Expect a brighter sky.
The God that strings the silver bow
Awakes sometimes the muses too,
And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
And let thy strength be seen:
But O! if Fortune fill thy sail
With more than a propitious gale,
Take half thy canvas in.

A REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

AND is this all? Can Reason do no more
Than bid me shun the deep and dread the shore?
Sweet moralist! afloat on life's rough sea,
The Christian has an art unknown to thee:
He holds no parley with unmanly fears;
Where Duty bids he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

HORACE, BOOK II. ODE XVI.

Otium Divos rogat in patenti.

EASE is the weary merchant's prayer,
Who ploughs by night the Ægean flood,
When neither moon nor stars appear,
Or faintly glimmer through the cloud.

For ease the Mede with quiver graced,
For ease the Thracian hero sighs,
Delightful ease all pant to taste,
A blessing which no treasure buys.

For neither gold can lull to rest,
Nor all a Consul's guard beat off
The tumults of a troubled breast,
The cares that haunt a gilded roof.

Happy the man whose table shows
A few clean ounces of old plate,
No fear intrudes on his repose,
No sordid wishes to be great.

Poor short-lived things, what plans we lay!
Ah, why forsake our native home?
To distant climates speed away;
For self sticks close where'er we roam.

Care follows hard, and soon o'ertakes
The well-rigg'd ship, the warlike steed;

Her destined quarry ne'er forsakes—
Not the wind flies with half her speed.

From anxious fears of future ill
Guard well the cheerful, happy now;
Gild e'en your sorrows with a smile,
No blessing is unmix'd below.

Thy neighing steeds and lowing herds,
Thy numerous flocks around thee graze,
And the best purple Tyre affords
Thy robe magnificent displays.

On me indulgent Heaven bestow'd
A rural mansion, neat and small;
This lyre;—and as for yonder crowd,
The happiness to hate them all.

THE FIFTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

A HUMOROUS DESCRIPTION OF THE AUTHOR'S JOURNEY FROM ROME TO BRUNDUSIUM.

'Twas a long journey lay before us,
When I and honest Heliodorus,
Who far in point of rhetoric
Surpasses every living Greek,
Each leaving our respective home,
Together sallied forth from Rome.
First at Aricia we alight,
And there refresh, and pass the night,
Our entertainment rather coarse
Than sumptuous, but I've met with worse.
Thence o'er the causeway soft and fair
To Appii Forum we repair.
But as this road is well supplied
(Temptation strong!) on either side
With inns commodious, snug, and warm,
We split the journey, and perform
In two days' time what's often done
By brisker travellers in one.
Here, rather choosing not to sup
Than with bad water mix my cup,
After a warm debate in spite
Of a provoking appetite,
I sturdily resolved at last
To balk it, and pronounce a fast,
And in a moody humor wait,
While my less dainty comrades bait.
Now o'er the spangled hemisphere
Diffused the starry train appear,
When there arose a desperate brawl;
The slaves and bargemen, one and all,
Rending their throats (have mercy on us!)
As if they were resolved to stun us.
"Steer the barge this way to the shore;
I tell you we'll admit no more;
Plague! will you never be content?"
Thus a whole hour at least is spent,
While they receive the several fares,
And kick the mule into his gears.
Happy, these difficulties past,
Could we have fallen asleep at last!
But, what with humming, croaking, biting,
Gnats, frogs, and all their plagues uniting,
These tuneful natives of the lake
Conspired to keep us broad awake.
Besides, to make the concert full,
Two maudlin wights, exceeding dull,
The bargeman and a passenger,
Each in his turn, essay'd an air
In honor of his absent fair.
At length the passenger, opprest
With wine, left off, and snored the rest.
The weary bargeman too gave o'er,
And, hearing his companion snore,
Seiz'd the occasion, fix'd the barge,
Turn'd out his mule to graze at large,
And slept forgetful of his charge.
And now the sun o'er eastern hill
Discover'd that our barge stood still;
When one, whose anger vex'd him sore,
With malice fraught, leaps quick on shore;
Plucks up a stake, with many a thwack
Assails the mule and driver's back.
Then slowly moving on with pain,
At ten Feronia's stream we gain,
And in her pure and glassy wave
Our hands and faces gladly lave.
Climbing three miles, fair Anxur's height
We reach, with stony quarries white.
While here, as was agreed, we wait,
Till, charged with business of the state,
Mæcenas and Coceeius come,
The messengers of peace from Rome.
My eyes, by watery humors blear
And sore, I with black balsam smear.
At length they join us, and with them
Our worthy friend Fonteius came;
A man of such complete desert,
Antony loved him at his heart.
At Fundi we refused to bait,
And laugh'd at vain Aufidius' state,
A prætor now, a scribe before,
The purple-border'd robe he wore,
His slave the smoking censor bore.
Tired, at Muræna's we repose,
At Formia sup at Capito's.
With smiles the rising morn we greet,
At Sinuessa pleased to meet
With Plotius, Varius, and the bard
Whom Mantua first with wonder heard.
The world no purer spirits knows;
For none my heart more warmly glows.
O! what embraces we bestow'd,
And with what joy our breasts o'erflow'd!
Sure, while my sense is sound and clear,
Long as I live, I shall prefer
A gay, good-natured, easy friend
To every blessing Heaven can send.
At a small village, the next night,
Near the Vulturnus we alight;
Where, as employ'd on state affairs,
We were supplied by the purveyors,
Frankly at once, and without hire,
With food for man and horse, and fire.
Capua next day betimes we reach,
Where Virgil and myself, who each
Labor'd with different maladies,
His such a stomach, mine such eyes,
As would not bear strong exercise,
In drowsy mood to sleep resort;
Mæcenas to the tennis-court.
Next at Coceeius' farm we're treated,
Above the Candian tavern seated;
His kind and hospitable board
With choice of wholesome food was stored.
Now, O ye Nine, inspire my lays!
To nobler themes my fancy raise!
Two combatants, who scorn to yield
The noisy, tongue-disputed field,

Sarmentus and Cicirrus, claim
A poet's tribute to their fame;
Cicirrus of true Oscian breed,
Sarmentus, who was never freed,
But ran away. We don't defame him;
His lady lives, and still may claim him.
Thus dignified, in harder fray
These champions their keen wit display
And first Sarmentus led the way.
"Thy locks," quoth he, "so rough and coarse,
Look like the mane of some wild horse."
We laugh; Cicirrus undismay'd—
"Have at you!"—cries, and shakes his head.
"'Tis well," Sarmentus says, "you've lost
That horn your forehead once could boast;
Since, maim'd and mangled as you are,
You seem to butt." A hideous scar
Improved, 'tis true, with double grace
The native horrors of his face.
Well, after much jocosely said
Of his grim front, so fiery red,
(For carbuncles had blotch'd it o'er
As usual on Campania's shore,)
"Give us," he cried, "since you're so big,
A sample of the Cyclop's jig!
Your shanks methinks no buskins ask,
Nor does your phiz require a mask."
To this Cicirrus: "In return
Of you, sir, now I fain would learn,
When 'twas, no longer deem'd a slave,
Your chains you to the Lares gave?
For though a scrivener's right you claim,
Your lady's title is the same.
But what could make you run away.
Since, pigmy as you are, each day
A single pound of bread would quite
O'erpower your puny appetite?"
Thus joked the champions, while we laugh'd,
And many a cheerful bumper quaff'd.
To Beneventum next we steer;
Where our good host by over care
In roasting thrushes lean as mice
Had almost fallen a sacrifice.
The kitchen soon was all on fire,
And to the roof the flames aspire;
There might you see each man and master
Striving, amidst this sad disaster,
To save the supper. Then they came
With speed enough to quench the flame.
From hence we first at distance see
The Apulian hills, well known to me,
Parch'd by the sultry western blast;
And which we never should have past.
Had not Trivicus by the way
Received us at the close of day.
But each was forced at entering here
To pay the tribute of a tear,
For mere of smoke than fire was seen—
The hearth was piled with logs so green.
From hence in chaises we were carried
Miles twenty-four, and gladly tarried
At a small town, whose name my verse
(So barbarous is it) can't rehearse.
Know it you may by many a sign,
Water is dearer far than wine;
There bread is deem'd such dainty fare,
That every prudent traveller
His wallet loads with many a crust;
For at Canusium you might just
As well attempt to gnaw a stone
As think to get a morsel down:
That too with scanty streams is fed;
Its founder was brave Diomed.
Good Varius (ah, that friends must part!)
Here left us all with aching heart.
At Rubi we arrived that day,
Well jaded by the length of way,
And sure poor mortals ne'er were wetter:
Next day no weather could be better;
No roads so bad; we scarce could crawl
Along to fishy Barium's wall.
The Egnatians next, who by the rules
Of common sense are knaves or fools,
Made all our sides with laughter heave,
Since we with them must needs believe
That incense in their temples burns,
And without fire to ashes turns.
To circumcision's bigots tell
Such tales! for me, I know full well
That in high heaven, unmoved by care,
The gods eternal quiet share:
Nor can I deem their spleen the cause,
While fickle Nature breaks her laws.
Brundusium last we reach: and there
Stop short the muse and traveller.

THE NINTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPERTINENT. ADAPTED TO PRESENT TIMES, 1759.

Sauntering along the street one day,
On trifles musing by the way—
Up steps a free familiar wight,
(I scarcely knew the man by sight).
"Carlos," he cried, "your hand, my dear;
Gad, I rejoice to meet you here!
Pray Heaven I see you well?" "So, so;
E'en well enough as times now go:
The same good wishes, sir, to you."
Finding he still pursued me close—
"Sir, you have business I suppose."
"My business, sir, is quickly done,
'Tis but to make my merit known.
Sir, I have read"—"O learned sir,
You and your learning I revere."
Then sweating with anxiety,
And sadly longing to get free,
Gods, how I scamper'd, scuffled for't,
Ran, halted, ran again, stopp'd short,
Beckon'd my boy, and pull'd him near,
And whisper'd nothing in his ear.
Teased with his loose unjointed chat—
"What street is this? What house is that?"
O Harlow, how I envied thee
Thy unabash'd effrontery,
Who darest a foe with freedom blame,
And call a coxcomb by his name!
When I return'd him answer none,
Obligingly the fool ran on,
"I see you're dismally distress'd,
Would give the world to be released.
But by your leave, sir, I shall still
Stick to your skirts, do what you will.
Pray which way does your journey tend?"
"O, 'tis a tedious way, my friend;
Across the Thames, the Lord knows where,
I would not trouble you so far."
"Well, I'm at leisure to attend you."
"Are you?" thought I, "the Deil befriend you."
No ass with double panniers rack'd,
Oppress'd, o'erladen, broken-back'd,

E'er look'd a thousandth part so dull
As I, nor half so like a fool.
"Sir, I know little of myself,
(Proceeds the pert conceited elf)
If Gray or Mason you will deem
Than me more worthy your esteem.
Poems I write by folios
As fast as other men write prose;
Then I can sing so loud, so clear,
That Beard cannot with me compare.
In dancing too I all surpass,
Not Cooke can move with such a grace."
Here I made shift with much ado
To interpose a word or two.—
"Have you no parents, sir, no friends,
Whose welfare on your own depends?"
"Parents, relations, say you? No.
They're all disposed of long ago."—
"Happy to be no more perplex'd!
My fate too threatens, I go next.
Despatch me, sir, 'tis now too late,
Alas! to struggle with my fate!
Well. I'm convinced my time is come—
When young, a gipsy told my doom.
The beldame shook her palsied head,
As she perused my palm, and said:
Of poison, pestilence, and war,
Gout, stone, defluxion, or catarrh,
You have no reason to beware.
Beware the coxcomb's idle prate;
Chiefly, my son, beware of that.
Be sure, when you behold him, fly
Out of all earshot, or you die."
To Rufus' Hall we now draw near
Where he was summoned to appear,
Refute the charge the plaintiff brought,
Or suffer judgment by default.
"For Heaven's sake, if you love me, wait
One moment!· I'll be with you straight."
Glad of a plausible pretence—
"Sir, I must beg you to dispense
With my attendance in the court.
My legs will surely suffer for't."
"Nay, prithee, Carlos, stop awhile!"
"Faith, sir, in law I have no skill.
Besides, I have no time to spare,
I must be going you know where."
"Well, I protest I'm doubtful now
Whether to leave my suit or you!"
"Me without scruple!" I reply,
"Me by all means, sir!"—"No, not I
Allons, Monsieur!" 'Twas vain, you know,
To strive with a victorious foe.
So I reluctantly obey,
And follow where he leads the way,
"You and Newcastle are so close,
Still hand and glove, sir—I suppose."
"Newcastle, let me tell you, sir,
Has not his equal everywhere."
"Well. There indeed your fortune's made;
Faith, sir, you understand your trade.
Would you but give me your good word:
Just introduce me to my lord,
I should serve charmingly by way
Of second fiddle, as they say:
What think you, sir? 'twere a good jest.
'Slife, we should quickly scout the rest."
"Sir, you mistake the matter far,
We have no second fiddles there—
Richer than I some folks may be;
More learned, but it hurts not me.
Friends though he has of different kind,
Each has his proper place assign'd."
"Strange matters these alleged by you!"
"Strange they may be, but they are true."
"Well then, I vow, 'tis mighty clever,
Now I long ten times more than ever
To be advanced extremely near
One of his shining character.
Have but the will—there wants no more,
'Tis plain enough you have the power.
His easy temper (that's the worst)
He knows, and is so shy at first."—
"But such a cavalier as you—
Lord, sir, you'll quickly bring him to!"
"Well; if I fail in my design,
Sir, it shall be no fault of mine.
If by the saucy servile tribe
Denied, what think you of a bribe?
Shut out to-day, not die with sorrow,
But try my luck again to-morrow;
Never attempt to visit him
But at the most convenient time;
Attend him on each levee day,
And there my humble duty pay—
Labor, like this, our want supplies;
And they must stoop who mean to rise."
While thus he wittingly harangued,
For which you'll guess I wish'd him hang'd,
Campley, a friend of mine, came by—
Who knew his humor more than I;
We stop, salute, and—"Why so fast,
Friend Carlos? Whither all this haste?"
Fired at the thought of a reprieve,
I pinch him, pull him, twitch his sleeve,
Nod, beckon, bite my lips, wink, pout,
Do everything but speak plain out:
While he, sad dog, from the beginning
Determined to mistake my meaning,
Instead of pitying my curse,
By jeering made it ten times worse.
"Campley, what secret (pray!) was that
You wanted to communicate!"
"I recollect. But 'tis no matter.
Carlos, we'll talk of that hereafter.
E'en let the secret rest. 'Twill tell
Another time, sir, just as well."
Was ever such a dismal day?
Unlucky cur, he steals away,
And leaves me, half bereft of life,
At mercy of the butcher's knife;
When sudden, shouting from afar,
See his antagonist appear!
The bailiff seized him quick as thought,
"Ho, Mr. Scoundrel! Are you caught?
Sir, you are witness to the arrest."
"Ay, marry, sir, I'll do my best."
The mob huzzas. Away they trudge,
Culprit and all before the judge.
Meanwhile I luckily enough
(Thanks to Apollo) got clear off.

TRANSLATION OF AN EPIGRAM FROM HOMER.*

PAY me my price, potters! and I will sing.
Attend, O Pallas! and with lifted arm

* No title is prefixed to this piece, but it appears to be a translation of one of the Επιγραμματα of Homer called Ο Καμινος, or The Furnace. Herodotus, or whoever was the author of the Life of Homer ascribed to him,

Protect their oven; let the cups and all
The sacred vessels blacken well, and, baked
With good success, yield them both fair renown
And profit, whether in the market sold
Or streets, and let no strife ensue between us.
But, oh ye potters! if with shameless front
Ye falsify your promise, then I leave
No mischief uninvoked to avenge the wrong.
Come, Syntrips, Smaragus, Sabactes, come,
And Asbetus, nor let your direst dread,
Omodamus, delay! Fire seize your house,
May neither house nor vestibule escape,
May ye lament to see confusion mar

observes, "certain potters, while they were busied in baking their ware, seeing Homer at a small distance, and having heard much said of his wisdom, called to him, and promised him a present of their comaodity, and of such other things as they could afford, if he would sing to them, when he sang as follows."

And mingle the whole labor of your hands,
And may a sound fill all your oven, such
As of a horse grinding his provender,
While all your pots and flagons bounce within.
Come hither, also, daughter of the sun,
Circe the sorceress, and with thy drugs
Poison themselves, and all that they have made!
Come, also, Chiron, with thy numerous troop
Of centaurs, as well those who died beneath
The club of Hercules, as who escaped,
And stamp their crockery to dust; down fall
Their chimney; let them see it with their eyes,
And howl to see the ruin of their art,
While I rejoice; and if a potter stoop
To peep into his furnace, may the fire
Flash in his face and scorch it, that all men
Observe, thenceforth, equity and good faith.

October, 1790.

COWPER'S LATIN POEMS.

MONTES GLACIALES, IN OCEANO GERMANICO NATANTES.

En, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata remotis,
Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras!
Non equidem priscæ sæclum redisse videtur
Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes
Et sylvas, egit. Sed tempora vix leviora
Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus alti
In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque pererrant.
Quid vero hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu?
Splendentes video, ecu pulchro ex ære vel auro
Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,
Baccâ cærulea, et flammas imitante pyropo.
Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu
Ingenti finxere sibi diademata reges?
Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos
Mercatorum oculos: prius et quam littora Gangis
Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.
Ortos unde putemus? An illos Ves'vius atrox
Protulit, ignivomisve ejecit faucibus Ætna?
Luce micant propria. Phœbive, per aëra purum
Nunc stimulantis equos argentea tela retorquent?
Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis
Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,
Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est
Multa onerata nive et canis conspersa pruinis,
Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma fere omnes
Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis
Illa strui voluit. Quotiys de culmine summo
Clivorum fluerent in littora prona, solutæ
Sole, nives propero tendentes in mare cursu,
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese
Mirum cœpit opus; glacieque ab origine rerum
In glaciem aggesta sublimes vertice tandem
Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.
Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset
Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,
Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,
Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum
Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,
Dum ruit in pelagum tanquam studiose natandi,
Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim.
Insula, in Ægæo fluitasse erratica ponto.
Sed non ex glacie Delos; neque torpida Delum
Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.
Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam
Decidua lauro; et Delum dilexit Apollo.
At vos, errones horrendi, et caligine digni
Cimmeria, Deus idem odit. Natalia vsetra,
Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri
Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cœlum!
Ite! Redite! Timete moras: ni leniter austro
Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas
Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti!

March 11, 1799.

ON THE ICE ISLANDS SEEN FLOATING IN THE GERMAN OCEAN.

What portents, from what distant region, ride,
Unseen till now in ours, the astonish'd tide?
In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves
Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves.
But now, descending whence of late they stood,
Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood.
Dire times were they, full charged with human woes;
And these, scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!
Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendor show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.

Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?
No. Never such a countless dazzling store
Had left unseen the Ganges' peopled shore.
Rapacious hands, and ever watchful eyes,
Should sooner far have mark'd and seized the prize.
Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come
From Vesuvius', or from Ætna's burning womb?
Thus shine they self-illumed, or but display
The borrow'd splendors of a cloudless day?
With borrow'd beams they shine. The gales that breathe
Now landward, and the current's force beneath,
Have borne them nearer; and the nearer sight,
Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.
Their lofty summits crested high they show,
With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow.
The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,
Bleak winter well nigh saddens all the year,
Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft as dissolved by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff, to join the flood below;
He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast
The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,
And long successive ages roll'd the while;
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand,
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.
Thus stood, and, unremovable by skill
Or force of man, had stood the structure still,
But that, though firmly fix'd, supplanted yet
By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach—and, with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,
Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,
Down went the ponderous mass. So bards of old
How Delos swam the Ægean deep have told.
But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore
Herb, fruit, and flower. She, crown'd with laurel, wore,
E'en under wintry skies, a summer smile;
And Delos was Apollo's favorite isle.
But, horrid wanderers of the deep, to you
He deems Cimmerian darkness only due.
Your hated birth he deign'd not to survey,
But, scornful, turn'd his glorious eyes away.
Hence, seek your home, nor longer rashly dare
The darts of Phœbus and a softer air;
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,
In no congenial gulf forever lost!

March 19, 1799.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION TO WILLIAM NORTHCOT.

Hic sepultus est
Inter suorum lacrymas
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
GULIELMI et MARIÆ filius
Unicus, unice dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780. Æt. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Namque iterum tecum, sim modo dignus, ero.
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

TRANSLATION.

Farewell! "But not forever," Hope replies.
Trace but his steps and meet him in the skies!
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again.

IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM

CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS, UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTAM.

Perfida, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
Undique privatas patriciasque domos.
Nequicquam conata sua, fœdissima sperat
Posse tamen nostra nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

TRANSLATION.

False, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,
To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own.
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,
We always spare a coward on his knees.

MOTTO ON A CLOCK.

WITH A TRANSLATION BY HAYLEY.

Quæ lenta accedit, quam velox præterit hora!
Ut capias, patiens esto, sed esto vigil!

Slow comes the hour; its passing speed how great!
Waiting to seize it—vigilantly wait!

A SIMILE LATINIZED.

Sors adversa gerit stimulum, sed tendit et alas:
Pungit api similis, sed velut ista fugit.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED.

To the March in Scipio.

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak,
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again,
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

Sept. 1782.

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII, CUI GEORGIUS REGALE NOMEN INDITUM.

Plangimus fortes. Perière fortes,
Patrium propter perière littus
Bis quatèr centum; subitò sub alto
Æquore mersi.

Navis, innitens lateri, jacebat,
Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,
Cùm levis, funes quatiens, ad imum
Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, caducam
Fortibus vitam voluère parcæ,
Nec sinunt ultrà tibi nos recentes
Nectere laurus,

Magne, qui nomen, licèt incanorum,
Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti!
At tuos olim memorabit ævum
Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,
Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,
Fissa non rimis abies, nec atrox
Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosi
Voce fallebant hilari laborem,
Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram impleverat heros.

Vos, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,
Humidum ex alto spolium levate,
Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos
Reddite amicis!

Hi quidem (sic dis placuit) fuère:
Sed ratis, nondum putris, ire possit
Rursus in bellum, Britonumque nomen
Tollere ad astra.

IN BREVITATEM VITÆ SPATII HOMINIBUS CONCESSI.

BY DR. JORTIN.

Hei mihi! lege ratâ sol occidit atque resurgit,
Lunaque mutatæ reparat dispendia formæ,
Astraque, purpurei telis extincta diei,
Rursus nocte vigent. Humiles telluris alumni,
Graminis herba virens, et florum pictu propago,
Quos crudelis hyems lethali tabe peredit,
Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, rediitque sereni
Temperies anni, fœcundo è cespite surgunt.
Nos domini rerum, nos, magna et pulchra minati,
Cum breve ver vitæ robustaque transiit ætas,
Deficimus; nec nos ordo revolubilis auras [vit.
Reddit in ætherens, tumuli neque claustra resol-

ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

Suns that set, and moons that wane,
Rise and are restored again;
Stars, that orient day subdues,
Night at her return renews.
Herbs and flowers, the beauteous birth
Of the genial womb of earth,
Suffer but a transient death
From the winter's cruel breath.
Zephyr speaks; serener skies
Warm the glebe, and they arise.
We, alas! earth's haughty kings,
We, that promise mighty things,
Losing soon life's happy prime,
Droop, and fade, in little time.
Spring returns, but not our bloom;
Still 'tis winter in the tomb.

Jan., 1784.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

The nymph must lose her female friend,
If more admired than she—
But where will fierce contention end,
If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
Appear'd two lovely foes,
Aspiring to the rank of queen,
The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon redden'd into rage,
And, swelling with disdain,
Appeal'd to many a poet's page
To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
A fair imperial flower;
She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
The goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save, ere yet too late,
The pride of the parterre.

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
And yours the statelier mien;
And, till a third surpasses you,
Let each be deem'd a queen.

Thus soothed and reconciled, each seeks
The fairest British fair;
The seat of empire is her cheeks,
They reign united there.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Heu inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest!
Sed fines ultra solitos discordia tendit,
Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet taeitosque recessus,
Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas;
Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultus,
Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsita superbia tangunt,
Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinu,
Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatum,
Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nutat,
Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,
Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usus
Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes.
Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,
Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit,
Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color,
Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,
Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham,
Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit;
Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius,
Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis. [hujus

THE POPLAR FIELD.

The poplars are fell'd, farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years had elapsed since I last took a view
Of my favorite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat, [heat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.*

* Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:—

The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Populeæ cecidit gratissima copia silvæ,
Conticuêre susurri, omnisque evanuit umbra.
Nullæ jam levibus se miscent frondibus auræ,
Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi! bis senos dum luctu torqueor annos,
His cogor silvis suetoque carere recessu,
Cum serò rediens, stratasque in gramine cernens,
Insedi arboribus, sub queis errare solebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus? Felicior illum
Silva tegit, duræ nondum permissa bipenni;
Scilicet exustos colles camposque patentes
Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui succisas doleo succidar et ipse,
Et priùs huic parilis, quàm creverit altera silva,
Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebo
Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam subitò periisse videns tam digna manere,
Agnosco humanas sortes et tristia fata—
Sit licèt ipse brevis, volucrique simillimus umbræ!
Est homini brevior citiùsque obitura voluptas.

VOTUM.

O matutini rores, auræque salubres,
O nemora, et lætæ rivis felicibus herbæ,
Graminei colles, et amœnæ in vallibus umbræ.
Fata modò dederint quas olim in rure paterno
Delicias, procul arte, procul formidine novi,
Quam vellem ignotus, quod mens mea semper avebat, [nectam.
Ante larem proprium placidam expectare se-
Tum demùm, exactis non infeliciter annis,
Sortiri tacitum lapidem, aut sub cespite condi!

TRANSLATION OF PRIOR'S CHLOE AND EUPHELIA.

Mercator, vigiles oculos ut fallere possit,
Numine sub ficto trans mare mittit opes;
Lenè sonat liquidumque meis Euphelia chordis,
Sed solam exoptant te, mea vota, Chlöe.

Ad speculum ornabat nitidos Euphelia crines,
Cum dixit, mea lux, heus, cane, sume lyram.
Namque lyram juxtà positam cum carmine vidit,
Suave quidem carmen dulcisonamque lyram.

Fila lyræ vocemque paro, suspiria surgunt,
Et miscent nuæeris murmura mœsta meis,
Dumque tuæ memoro laudes, Euphelia, formæ,
Tota anima intereà pendet ab ore Chlöes.

Subrubet illa pudore, et contrahit altera frontem,
Me torquet mea mens conscia, psallo, tremo;
Atque Cupidineâ dixit Dea cincta coronâ,
Heu! fallendi artem quam didicere parum.

VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD.

SPOKEN AT THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION NEXT AFTER HIS DECEASE.

Our good old friend is gone; gone to his rest,
Whose social converse was itself a feast.

O ye of riper years, who recollect
How once ye loved, and eyed him with respect,
Both in the firmness of his better day,
While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,
And when, impair'd by time, and glad to rest,
Yet still with looks in mild complacence drest,
He took his annual seat, and mingled here
His sprightly vein with yours—now drop a tear!
In morals blameless as in manners meek,
He knew no wish that he might blush to speak,
But, happy in whatever state below,
And richer than the rich in being so,
Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed
At length from one* as made him rich indeed.
Hence then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here!
Go! garnish merit in a higher sphere,
The brows of those, whose more exalted lot
He could congratulate, but envied not!
Light lie the turf, good senior, on thy breast;
And tranquil, as thy mind was, be thy rest.
Though, living thou hadst more desert than fame,
And not a stone now chronicles thy name!

Abiit senex. Periit senex amabilis,
Quo non fuit jucundior.
Lugete vos, ætas quibus maturior
Senem colendum præstitit;
Seu quando, viribus valentioribus
Firmoque fretus pectore,
Florentiori vos juventute excolens
Curâ fovebat patriâ;
Seu quando, fractus, jamque donatus rude
Vultu sed usque blandulo,
Miscere gaudebat suas facetias
His annuis leporibus.

* He was usher and under-master of Westminster, near fifty years, and retired from his occupation when he was near seventy, with a handsome pension from the king.

Vixit probus, purâque simplex indole,
Blandisque comis moribus,
Et dives æquâ mente, charus omnibus,
Unius auctus munere.
Ite, tituli! Meritis beatioribus
Aptate laudes debitas!
Nec invidebat ille, si quibus favens
Fortuna plus arriserat.
Placide senex, levi quiescas cespite,
Etsi superbum nec vivo tibi
Decus sit inditum, nec mortuo
Lapis notatus nomine!

As Cowper's Version of Homer is not included in this Edition of his Works, it seems necessary to assign the reasons which have led to the omission.

Distinguished as this Version unquestionably is, beyond any preceding attempt, for its fidelity and close adherence to the Grecian Bard, as well as for other excellences which have already been specified, it has still failed in securing an adequate reception from the British public. In the religious portion of the community it is well known that a very general sentiment of regret exists that the author of the Task, whose muse was capable of such high moral flights, should have consumed so many years in this laborious enterprise. Under these circumstances, its republication here, appeared to be undesirable, especially as it would have added *one-third to the cost* of the present Edition, and as editions of Cowper's Homer are already before the public, and accessible to all who attach an interest to this portion of the Poet's Works.

THREE PAPERS, BY COWPER,

INSERTED IN THE CONNOISSEUR.

"During Cowper's visit to Eartham, he kindly pointed out to me," Hayley observes, "three of his papers in the last volume of the 'Connoisseur.'—I inscribed them with his name at the time; and imagine that the readers of his Life may be gratified in seeing them inserted here. I find other numbers of that work ascribed to him, but the three following I print as his, on his own explicit authority. Number 119, Thursday, May 6, 1756—Number 134, Thursday, August 19,—Number 138, Thursday, Sept. 16."

No. CXIX.

Plenus rimarum sum, huc et illuc perfluo.
TER.

Leaky at bottom; if those chinks you stop,
In vain—the secret will run o'er at top.

There is no mark of our confidence taken more kindly by a friend than the entrusting him with a secret, nor any which he is so likely to abuse. Confidants in general are like crazy firelocks, which are no sooner charged and cocked than the spring gives way, and the report immediately follows. Happy to have been thought worthy the confidence of one friend, they are impatient to manifest their importance to another; till, between them and their friend and their friend's friend, the whole matter is presently known *to all our friends round the Wrekin.* The secret catches as it were by contact, and like electrical matter breaks forth from every link in the chain, almost at the same instant. Thus the whole Exchange may be thrown into a buzz to-morrow, by what was whispered in the middle of Marlborough Downs this morning; and in a week's time the streets may ring with the intrigue of a woman of fashion, bellowed out from the foul mouths of the hawkers, though at present it is known to no creature living but her gallant and her waiting maid.

As the talent of secrecy is of so great importance to society, and the necessary commerce between individuals cannot be securely carried on without it, that this deplorable weakness should be so general is much to be lamented. You may as well pour water into a funnel or sieve, and expect it to be retained there, as commit any of your concerns to so slippery a companion. It is remarkable that, in those men who have thus lost the faculty of retention, the desire of being communicative is always most prevalent where it is least justified. If they are entrusted with a matter of no great moment, affairs of more consequence will perhaps in a few hours shuffle it entirely out of their thoughts; but if anything be delivered to them with an earnestness, a low voice, and the gesture of a man in terror for the consequence of its being known; if the door is bolted, and every precaution taken to prevent surprise, however they may promise secresy, and however they may intend it, the weight upon their minds will be so extremely oppressive, that it will certainly put their tongues in motion.

This breach of trust, so universal amongst us, is perhaps, in great measure owing to our education. The first lessons our little masters and misses are taught is to become blabs and tell-tales: they are bribed to divulge the petty intrigues of the family below stairs to papa and mamma in the parlor, and a doll or hobby-horse is generally the encouragement of a propensity which could scarcely be atoned for by a whipping. As soon as children can lisp out the little intelligence they have picked up in the hall or the kitchen, they are admired for their wit; if the butler has been caught kissing the housekeeper in his pantry, or the footman detected in romping with the chamber-maid, away flies little Tommy or Betsy with the news; the parents are lost in admiration of the pretty rogue's understanding, and reward such uncommon ingenuity with a kiss or a sugar-plum.

Nor does an inclination to secrecy meet with less encouragement at school. The gouvernantes at the boarding-school teach miss to be a good girl, and tell them everything she knows: thus, if any young lady is

unfortunately discovered eating a green apple in a corner: if she is heard to pronounce a naughty word, or it caught picking the letters out of another miss's sampler; away runs the chit who is so happy as to get the start of the rest, screams out her information as she goes: and the prudent matron chucks her under the chin, and tells her that she is a good girl, and everybody will love her.

The management of our young gentlemen is equally absurd; in many of our schools, if a lad is discovered in a scrape, the impeachment of an accomplice, as at the Old Bailey, is made the condition of a pardon. I remember a boy, engaged in robbing an orchard, who was unfortunately taken prisoner in an apple-tree, and conducted, under the strong guard of the farmer and his dairy-maid, to the master's house. Upon his absolute refusal to discover his associates, the pedagogue undertook to lash him out of his fidelity: but finding it impossible to scourge the secret out of him, he at last gave him up for an obstinate villain, and sent him to his father, who told him he was ruined, and was going to disinherit him for not betraying his school-fellows.

I must own I am not fond of thus drubbing our youths into treachery; and am much pleased with the request of Ulysses, when he went to Troy, who begged of those who were to have the care of young Telemachus, that they would above all things teach him to be just, sincere, faithful, and to keep a secret.

Every man's experience must have furnished him with instances of confidants who are not to be relied on, and friends who are not to be trusted; but few perhaps have thought it a character so well worth their attention, as to have marked out the different degrees into which it may be divided, and the different methods by which secrets are communicated.

Ned Trusty is a tell-tale of a very singular kind. Having some sense of his duty, he hesitates a little at the breach of it. If he engages never to utter a syllable, he most punctually performs his promise; but then he has the knack of insinuating by a nod, and a shrug well-timed, or a seasonable leer, as much as others can convey in express terms. It is difficult, in short, to determine whether he is more to be admired for his resolution in not mentioning, or his ingenuity in disclosing, a secret. He is also excellent at a doubtful phrase, as Hamlet calls it, or ambiguous giving out, and his conversation consists chiefly of such broken innendoes as —"well I know—or I could—and if I would —or, if I list to speak—or there be, and if there might," &c.

Here he generally stops; and leaves it to his hearers to draw proper inferences from these piecemeal premises. With due encouragement however he may be prevailed on to slip the padlock from his lips, and immediately overwhelms you with a torrent of secret history, which rushes forth with more violence for having been so long confined.

Poor Meanwell, though he never fails to transgress, is rather to be pitied than condemned. To trust him with a secret is to spoil his appetite, to break his rest, and to deprive him for a time of every earthly enjoyment. Like a man who travels with his whole fortune in his pocket, he is terrified if you approach him, and immediately suspects that you come with a felonious intention to rob him of his charge. If he ventures abroad, it is to walk in some unfrequented place, where he is least in danger of an attack. At home, he shuts himself up from his family, paces to and fro in his chamber, and has no relief but from muttering over to himself what he longs to publish to the world; and would gladly submit to the office of town-crier, for the liberty of proclaiming it in the market-place. At length, however, weary of his burden, and resolved to bear it no longer, he consigns it to the custody of the first friend he meets, and returns to his wife with a cheerful aspect, and wonderfully altered for the better.

Careless is perhaps equally undesigning, though not equally excusable. Entrust him with an affair of the utmost importance, on the concealment of which your fortune and happiness depend, he hears you with a kind of half attention, whistles a favorite air, and accompanies it with the drumming of his fingers upon the table. As soon as your narration is ended, or perhaps in the middle of it, he asks your opinion of his swordknot—condemns his tailor for having dressed him in a snuff-colored coat instead of a pompadour, and leaves you in haste to attend an auction, where, as if he meant to dispose of his intelligence to the best bidder, he divulges it with a voice as loud as an auctioneer's: and, when you tax him with having played you false, he is heartily sorry for it, but never knew that it was to be a secret.

To these I might add the character of the open and unreserved, who thinks it a breach of friendship to conceal anything from his intimates; and the impertinent, who, having by dint of observation made himself master of your secret, imagines he may lawfully publish the knowledge it cost him so much labor to obtain, and considers that privilege as the reward due to his industry. But I shall leave these, with many other characters which my reader's own experience may suggest to him, and conclude with prescribing, as a short remedy for this evil, that no man may betray the counsel of his friend—let every man keep his own.

No. CXXXIV.

Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refeceris
Ædesque labentes Deorum, et
Fœda nigro simulacra fumo.—Hor.

The tott'ring tow'r, and mould'ring wall repair,
And fill with decency the house of pray'r;
Quick to the needy curate bring relief,
And deck the parish-church without a brief

MR. VILLAGE TO MR. TOWN.

Dear Cousin,—The country at present, no less than the metropolis, abounding with politicians of every kind, I begin to despair of picking up any intelligence that might possibly be entertaining to your readers. However, I have lately visited some of the most distant parts of the kingdom with a clergyman of my acquaintance: I shall not trouble you with an account of the improvements that have been made in the seats we saw, according to the modern taste, but proceed to give you some reflections which occurred to us in observing several country churches, and the behavior of their congregations.

The ruinous condition of some of these edifices gave me great offence; and I could not help wishing that the honest vicar, instead of indulging his genius for improvements, by enclosing his gooseberry-bushes with a Chinese rail, and converting half an acre of his glebe land into a bowling-green, would have applied part of his income to the more laudable purpose of sheltering his parishioners from the weather during their attendance on divine service. It is no uncommon thing to see the parsonage-house well thatched, and in exceeding good repair, while the church, perhaps, has scarce any other roof than the ivy that grows over it. The noise of owls, bats, and magpies, makes the principal part of the church music in many of these ancient edifices; and the walls, like a large map, seem to be portioned out into capes, seas and promontories, by the various colors by which the damps have stained them. Sometimes, the foundation being too weak to support the steeple any longer, it has been found expedient to pull down that part of the building, and to hang the bells under a wooden shed on the ground beside it. This is the case in a parish in Norfolk, through which I lately passed, and where the clerk and the sexton, like the two figures of St. Dunstan's, serve the bells in the capacity of clappers, by striking them alternately with a hammer.

In other churches, I have observed that nothing unseemly or ruinous is to be found, except in the clergyman, and the appendages of his person. The 'squire of the parish, or his ancestors, perhaps to testify their devotion and leave a lasting monument of their magnificence, have adorned the altar-piece with the richest crimson velvet, embroidered with vine-leaves and ears of wheat; and have dressed up the pulpit with the same splendor and expense; while the gentleman who fills it, is exalted in the midst of all this finery, with a surplice as dirty as a farmer's frock, and a periwig that seems to have transferred its faculty of curling to the band which appears in full buckle beneath it.

But if I was concerned to see several distressed pastors, as well as many of our country churches in a tottering condition, I was more offended with the indecency of worship in others. I could wish that the clergy would inform their congregations, that there is no occasion to scream themselves hoarse in making their responses; that the town-crier is not the only person qualified to pray with true devotion; and that he who bawls the loudest, may nevertheless be the wickedest fellow in the parish. The old women too in the aisle might be told, that their time would be better employed in attending to the sermon, than in fumbling over their tattered Testaments till they have found the text; by which time the discourse is near drawing to a conclusion: while a word or two of instruction might not be thrown away upon the younger part of the congregation, to teach them that making posies in summer-time, and cracking nuts in autumn, is no part of the religious ceremony. The good old practice of psalm-singing is indeed wonderfully improved in many country churches, since the days of Sternhold and Hopkins; and there is scarce a parish clerk who has so little taste as not to pick his staves out of the new version. This has occasioned great complaints in some places, where the clerk has been forced to bawl by himself, because the rest of the congregation cannot find the psalm at the end of their prayer books; while others are highly disgusted at the innovation, and stick as obstinately to the old version as to the old style.

The tunes themselves have also been new set to jiggish measures, and the sober drawl, which used to accompany the two first staves of the hundredth psalm, with the 'Gloria Patri,' is now split into as many quavers as an Italian air. For this purpose there is in every county an itinerant band of vocal musicians, who make it their business to go round to all the churches in their turns, and, after a prelude with a pitch-pipe, astonish the audience with hymns set to the new Winchester measure, and anthems of their own composing.

As these new-fashioned psalmodists are necessarily made up of young men and maids, we may naturally suppose that there is a perfect concord and symphony between them; and, indeed, I have known it happen that these sweet singers have more than once

been brought into disgrace by too close a unison between the thorough-base and the treble.

It is a difficult matter to decide which is looked upon as the greatest man in a country church, the parson or his clerk. The latter is most certainly held in the higher veneration, where the former happens to be only a poor curate, who rides post every sabbath from village to village, and mounts and dismounts at the church door. The clerk's office is not only to tag the prayers with an amen, or usher in the sermon with a stave, but he is also the universal father to give away the brides, and the standing god-father to all the new-born bantlings. But in many places there is still a greater man belonging to the church than either the parson or the clerk himself. The person I mean is the 'squire; who, like the king, may be styled the head of the church in his own parish. If the benefice be in his own gift, the vicar is his creature, and of consequence entirely at his devotion: or, if the care of the church be left to a curate, the Sunday fees, roast beef and plum-pudding, and the liberty to shoot in the manor, will bring him as much under the 'squire's command as his dogs and horses.

For this reason the bell is often kept tolling, and the people waiting in the churchyard an hour longer than the usual time; nor must the service begin till the 'squire has strutted up the aisle and seated himself in the great pew in the chancel. The length of the sermon is also measured by the will of the 'squire, as formerly by the hourglass, and I know one parish where the preacher has always the complaisance to conclude his discourse, however abruptly, the minute that the 'squire gives the signal by rising up after his nap.

In a village church, the 'squire's lady, or the vicar's wife, are perhaps the only females that are stared at for their finery; but in the large cities and towns, where the newest fashions are brought down weekly by the stage-coach or wagon, all the wives and daughters of the most topping tradesmen vie with each other every Sunday in the elegance of their apparel. I could even trace their gradations in their dress according to the opulence, the extent, and the distance of the place from London. I was at a church in a populous city in the north, where the mace-bearer cleared the way for Mrs. Mayoress, who came sideling after him in an enormous fan-hoop, of a pattern which had never been seen before in those parts. At another church in a corporation town, I saw several *Négligées*, with furbelowed aprons, which had long disputed the prize of superiority; but these were most wofully eclipsed by a burgess's daughter just come from London, who appeared in a *Trollope* or *Slammerkin* with treble ruffles to the cuffs, pinked and gimped, and the sides of the petticoat drawn up in festoons. In some lesser borough towns, the contest I found lay between three or four black and green bibs and aprons; at one, a grocer's wife attracted our eyes by a new-fashioned cap called a *Joan*, and at another, they were wholly taken up by a mercer's daughter in a nun's hood.

I need not say anything of the behavior of the congregation in these more polite places of religious resort; as the same genteel ceremonies are practised there as at the most fashionable churches in town. The ladies, immediately on their entrance, breathe a pious ejaculation through their fan-sticks, and the beaux very gravely address themselves to the haberdashers' bills, glewed upon the lining of their hats. This pious duty is no sooner performed, than the exercise of bowing and courtseying succeeds: the locking and unlocking of the pews drowns the reader's voice at the beginning of the service; and the rustling of silks, added to the whispering and tittering of so much good company, renders him totally unintelligible to the very end of it.

I am, dear cousin, yours, &c.

No. CXXXVIII.

Servatâ semper lege et ratione loquendi.—Juv.

Your talk to decency and reason suit,
Nor prate like fools, or gabble like a brute!

In the comedy of "The Frenchman in London," which, we are told, was acted at Paris with universal applause for several nights together, there is a character of a rough Englishman, who is represented as quite unskilled in the graces of conversation, and his dialogue consists almost entirely of a repetition of the common salutation of—"How do you do?—How do you do?" Our nation has, indeed, been generally supposed to be of a sullen and uncommunicative disposition; while, on the other hand, the loquacious French have been allowed to possess the art of conversing beyond all other people. The Englishman requires to be wound up frequently, and stops very soon; but the Frenchman runs on in a continual alarum. Yet it must be acknowledged, that, as the English consist of very different humors, their manner of discourse admits of great variety; but the whole French nation converse alike, and there is no difference in their address between a marquis and a valet-de-chambre. We may frequently see a couple of French barbers accosting each other in the street, and paying their compliments with the same volubility of speech, the same grimace and action, as two courtiers in the Tuileries.

I shall not attempt to lay down any par-

ticular rules for conversation, but rather point out such faults in discourse and behavior as render the company of half mankind rather tedious than amusing. It is in vain, indeed, to look for conversation, where we might expect to find it in the greatest perfection, among persons of fashion; there it is almost annihilated by universal card-playing; insomuch that I have heard it given as a reason why it is impossible for our present writers to succeed in the dialogue of genteel comedy, that our people of quality scarce ever meet but to game. All their discourse turns upon the odd trick and the four honors, and it is no less a maxim with the votaries of whist than with those of Bacchus, that talking spoils company.

Every one endeavors to make himself as agreeable to society as he can; but it often happens that those who most aim at shining in conversation overshoot their mark. Though a man succeeds, he should not (as is frequently the case) engross the whole talk to himself; for that destroys the very essence of conversation, which is talking together. We should try to keep up conversation like a ball bandied to and fro from one to another, rather than seize it ourselves, and drive it before us like a football. We should likewise be cautious to adapt the matter of our discourse to our company, and not talk Greek before ladies, or of the last new furbelow to a meeting of country justices.

But nothing throws a more ridiculous air over our conversations than certain peculiarities, easily acquired, but very difficultly conquered and discarded. In order to display these absurdities in a truer light, it is my present purpose to enumerate such of them as are most commonly to be met with; and first to take notice of those buffoons in society, the attitudinarians and face-makers. These accompany every word with a peculiar grimace or gesture; they assent with a shrug, and contradict with a twisting of the neck; are angry with a wry mouth, and pleased in a caper or a minuet step. They may be considered as speaking harlequins, and their rules of eloquence are taken from the posture-master. These should be condemned to converse only in dumb show with their own person in the looking-glass; as well as the smirkers and smilers, who so prettily set off their faces, together with their words, by a je-ne-sçai-quoi between a grin and a dimple. With these we may likewise rank the affected tribe of mimics, who are constantly taking off the peculiar tone of voice or gesture of their acquaintance; though they are such wretched imitators, that (like bad painters) they are frequently forced to write the name under the picture, before we can discover any likeness.

Next to these, whose elocution is absorbed in action, and who converse chiefly with their arms and legs, we may consider the professed speakers. And first, the emphatical: who squeeze, and press, and ram down every syllable with excessive vehemence and energy. These orators are remarkable for their distinct elocution and force of expression; they dwell on the important particles *of* and *the*, and the significant conjunctive *and*, which they seem to hawk up with much difficulty out of their own throats, and to cram them with no less pain into the ears of their auditors.

These should be suffered only to syringe, as it were, the ears of a deaf man, through a hearing-trumpet; though I must confess, that I am equally offended with whisperers or low speakers, who seem to fancy all their acquaintance deaf, and come up so close to you, that they may be said to measure noses with you, and frequently overcome you with the exhalations of a powerful breath. I would have these oracular gentry obliged to talk at a distance through a speaking-trumpet, or apply their lips to the walls of a whispering-gallery. The wits who will not condescend to utter anything but a bon-mot, and the whistlers or tunehummers, who never articulate at all, may be joined very agreeably together in concert; and to these tinkling cymbals I would also add the sounding brass —the bawler, who inquires after your health with the bellowing of a town-crier.

The tattlers, whose pliable pipes are admirably adapted to the "soft parts of conversation," and sweetly "prattling out of fashion," make very pretty music from a beautiful face and a female tongue; but from a rough manly voice and coarse features, mere nonsense is as harsh and dissonant as a jig from a hurdy-gurdy. The swearers I have spoken of in a former paper; but the half-swearers, who split, and mince, and fritter their oaths into *Gad's but*, *ad's fish*, and *demme*, the Gothic humbuggers, and those who "nickname God's creatures," and call a man a cabbage, a crab, a queer cub, an odd fish, and an unaccountable *muskin*, should never come into company without an interpreter. But I will not tire my reader's patience by pointing out all the pests of conversation; nor dwell particularly on the sensibles, who pronounce dogmatically on the most trivial points, and speak in sentences;—the wonderers, who are always wondering what o'clock it is, or wondering whether it will rain or no, or wondering when the moon changes; the phraseologists, who explain a thing by *all that*, or enter into particulars with *this*, *that*, and *t'other*; and lastly, the silent men, who seem afraid of opening their mouths lest they should catch cold, and literally observe the precept of the gospel, by letting their conversation be only yea, yea, and nay, nay.

The rational intercourse kept up by conversation is one of our principal distinctions from brutes. We should, therefore, endeavor to turn this peculiar talent to our advantage, and consider the organs of speech as the instruments of understanding. We should be very careful not to use them as the weapons of vice, or tools of folly, and do our utmost to unlearn any trivial or ridiculous habits which tend to lessen the value of such an inestimable prerogative. It is indeed imagined by some philosophers, that even birds and beasts (though without the power of articulation) perfectly understand one another by the sounds they utter; and that dogs and cats, &c., have each a particular language to themselves, like different nations. Thus it may be supposed that the nightingales of Italy have as fine an ear for their own native wood notes, as any signor or signora for an Italian air; that the boars of Westphalia gruntle as expressively through the nose as the inhabitants in High German; and that the frogs in the dykes of Holland croak as intelligibly as the natives jabber their Low Dutch. However this may be, we may consider those whose tongues hardly seem to be under the influence of reason, and do not keep up the proper conversation of human creatures, as imitating the language of different animals: thus, for instance, the affinity between chatterers and monkeys, and praters and parrots, is too obvious not to occur at once: grunters and growlers may be justly compared to hogs; snarlers are curs; and the *spitfire passionate* are a sort of wild cats, that will not bear stroking, but will purr when they are pleased. Complainers are screech-owls; and story-tellers, always repeating the same dull note, are cuckoos. Poets that prick up their ears at their own hideous braying are no better than asses; critics in general are venomous serpents that delight in hissing; and some of them, who have got by heart a few technical terms, without knowing their meaning, are no other than magpies. I myself, who have crowed to the whole town for near three years past, may perhaps put my readers in mind of a dunghill cock; but as I must acquaint them that they will hear the last of me on this day fortnight, I hope they will then consider me as a swan, who is supposed to sing sweetly in his dying moments.

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